

# PUBLIC

**THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART, ON FRIDAY, 28 APRIL 2023**

## **TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED HOBART STADIUM FEASIBILITY PLANNING PROCESS**

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**CHAIR** (Ms Forrest) - Thank you, Terry, for appearing before the Public Accounts Committee Inquiry into the proposed stadium and Tasmanian AFL team and the decision-making processes around that. We have your submission and we appreciate that. It is a public hearing, it is being broadcast and the evidence will be transcribed and put onto our website as public information. If you do have something of confidential nature, you could that request to the Committee and we would consider that, otherwise it is all public. Everything you say before the Committee is covered by parliamentary privilege but that may not extend beyond this hearing for anything you might say beyond that. Do you have any questions before we start?

**Mr ROE** - No, I am fine, thank you, Chair.

**CHAIR** - We have one member online. I think you probably know most of us across the table. Meg Webb, Dean Young, I am Ruth Forrest, Shane Broad, and Josh Willie. If you would like to do the statutory declaration, introduce yourself and then speak to your submission.

**Mr TERRY ROE**, STATE PRESIDENT, VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION (TASMANIA), WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - Did you want to make some opening comments?

**Mr ROE** - Yes, Chair. I am here representing the Vietnam Veterans Association and all other veterans who are not financial members of our association but particularly Vietnam veterans. When the announcement that there was going to be a stadium was first mooted in the social media, our members got together. At our Council meeting last year, we discussed in depth the impact that it would possibly have on the Cenotaph and that area. The Vietnam Veterans Association endorsed me to write a letter on their behalf to the Premier and also to the Prime Minister of Australia about our concerns about that impact that this stadium would have on the Cenotaph. That's why I'm here today because obviously we have real concerns about the impact and its integrity compromised.

**CHAIR** - When you say 'the impact', what particular aspects of the impact have been concerns to your members?

**Mr ROE** - Not only the initial impact but when you're standing up there, not only on Anzac Day or Remembrance Day or Vietnam Veterans' Day but any other day of the year, when families who have lost loved ones or veterans who have lost mates go there for quiet reflection and contemplation, the views from there are really helpful for a veteran or a family who might still be grieving in some form for lost loved ones in whatever conflict they were in.

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I know we don't have the details of the plans but what has been talked about in the media - the height of the stadium is going to impact, particularly, the views down to the river and to the dock area of Hobart. If you imagine a fairly large cruise ship docked there at the moment, if you are standing at the Cenotaph, you cannot see the docks down towards Salamanca. It is blocked out, you can't see it. This is what the stadium will do.

If a stadium is built, our concerns are for the integrity of that sacred site. You will have people transitioning from the stadium up to their cars. Our association has not seen anything about where people are going to park if they go to the stadium. One can suggest that they're going to park around the Cenotaph at the Domain where they do at the moment for other events. So, if there is a pop concert, for example, or some form of evening event or post an AFL game, it's not unreasonable, I think, to suggest that there may be some crowds of people, slightly intoxicated or whatever, who might damage that sacred site - not only the Cenotaph structure itself but the Eternal Flame of Remembrance and the war memorial and perhaps even the trees that are planted there in honour of those soldiers who fought World War 1, soldiers who are very close by.

It really does concern us that that whole sacred, solemn site could be affected in some way and its integrity be damaged by cans, vomiting - you can imagine what may happen. From a veteran's point of view, and I'm very fortunate and proud to speak on behalf of a number of veterans, we must preserve that site as much as we possibly can.

I asked in my letter to the Premier that if he could give the veterans some sort of guarantee that whatever is constructed there that the integrity of the Cenotaph in the Queens Domain would be protected. I've seen nothing from his office giving that assurance.

**CHAIR** - At the moment, what this Committee has been told by the Government is it will be a roofed stadium, which means it needs to be high enough to enclose all the lights and the broadcasting lights as well as the lights to play under. There has been more recent commentary about it, perhaps, not being a fixed roof. Anyway, we have no idea; the same as you. Is light and sound an issue for you? That's something that you get from the port, obviously. Is that an issue, or is it mostly the visual amenity?

**Mr ROE** - That's all part of it. As I say, people and visitors to Tasmania go up there to read the Victoria Cross information and to see the Eternal Flame but that will affect their solemn contemplation when they go there for a quiet period of reflection.

If there is an event going on at whatever time during the day - a fairly large international band or a football match, of course, that noise will affect those people who are there to pay their respects to their loved ones, who are taking 15 minutes or half an hour out of their day to have some reflection. That will definitely affect it.

**Mr WILLIE** - I'm interested in the engagement from the Government. When did you first find out about this proposal, and how?

**Mr ROE** - I think it was in the media. I've been living permanently in Tasmania since 1986. I come from an AFL state - South Australia. I've played Aussie rules football.

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Our association, me in particular, want to see a Tasmanian team in AFL. But the stadium where it is being proposed is not the right fit. Not only from the Cenotaph's point of view, but for other reasons. As I said, we had a meeting, I wrote to the Premier on 7 December [2022]. He then organised a meeting on 20 September (sic) to attend a briefing at State Growth - Andrew Finch, who was the Director or the Chair of Major Stadiums in Tasmania. I came away less impressed with what he was telling me.

**CHAIR** - What was the less impressive thing?

**Mr ROE** - If you do not mind me saying, he was saying that a stadium would take up 60 percent of the 9 hectare space. He said there would be a light rail and a water ferry to transport people from the Northern suburbs to the stadium. That the Northern subs would be Wilkinson's Point at, I think, where the JackJumpers centre is, which we fully agree with. We need a water taxi service and a light rail is fantastic. We do not have an issue with that. He said there was no plans that he could show us, or concept designs or anything.

I raised the subject about the security: the security of the Cenotaph and the Victoria Cross memorial and the Eternal Flame. He said, 'We'll put some security people up there to help guide and transit people from the Bridge of Remembrance and their cars to the stadium and then back to their cars'. I said, 'Really?'. In reality it would just not work.

**Mr WILLIE** - When you have thousands of people exiting a venue like that, it would be very difficult.

**Mr ROE** - It would be very difficult, yes. Then he said, 'We will maybe consider a museum and a café for veterans with some sort of military theme to connect the Cenotaph'. I said to him, 'Well, two kilometres up the road you have an outstanding military museum at Anglesea barracks. Why would you build another one there?'.  
I will admit for the last few weeks type of thing, when this other alternative plan came about what might go in there, I said well I am not sure what the military people might think but we could move the military museum down to MacPoint and have a really lovely and bigger space for a museum to connect to the Cenotaph and the veteran community type of thing. He said the stadium would not block out any visibility over the docks of the City Hobart. As I have said, he can go up there any time when there is a fairly large cruise ship parked at the wharf there and it does block it out.

**CHAIR** - When he said that it would not block the view, he was indicating, by that obviously, that it would not be very high? Because otherwise it would?

**Mr WILLIE** - And so when was this meeting?

**Mr ROE** - This meeting was the 20<sup>th</sup> of December [2022].

**CHAIR** - Did you question him on that?

**Mr ROE** - Yes, and we spoke -

**CHAIR** - And what was the response?

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**Mr ROE** - He said, 'Oh look, it won't block it out'.

**CHAIR** - Trust me.

**Mr ROE** - He said they could go down in the ground a bit, and I said yep. I have heard stories and commentary from other different places that you are looking at possibly the height of the Hobart hospital. I heard Anna Reynolds say a couple of days ago she thought, 40 metres, or something like that.

**Mr WILLIE** - They cannot go down into the ground because it is contaminated. One of the Government reports - the Aurecon report - say that the pitch will actually be about five metres above ground because of the contamination and because of the levels.

**Mr ROE** - He said there are going to be 44 events and 28 new events a year. I am thinking, Tasmania has a population of 530,000 people. When there are games down here at Bellerive oval, there is a percentage of people up north that come down and travel, also the main land people come down and travel to support their AFL team. We are flat out filling those grounds, and we are flat out, same thing with UTAS up there, we are lucky to get 11,000, 14,000 type of thing. I am a pretty simple veteran but I just cannot see this being filled to capacity, or paying for itself.

We have been told, I think, it is 11 AFL games, but not all played in Hobart. There are going to be some played up in Launceston. The major events, I just do not see them attracting like a Queen + Adam Lambert band to come down to Hobart. Logistically, it is just too difficult for them to move all the tonnes and tonnes of equipment they have. I just do not see it.

**Mr WILLIE** - Have you had any further engagement this year with the Government? There is speculation there will be announcements on the weekend. Has the Premier reached out to you?

**Mr ROE** - No, he has not, Josh. After that meeting on 20 December [2022], on 3 January [2023] I received a response to our letter, 7 December [2022], from the Premier, Jeremy Rockliff, hoping that it was useful and highlighted how the Vietnam Veterans' view and veterans' contribution to the Tasmanian community could be further enhanced and celebrated and they said:

the Tasmanian Government will work closely with the community, including veterans. Please know my Government, through the Minister for Veterans Affairs, intends to work closely with yourselves and other veterans.

Now I know not a great deal has happened, but our association has never once been consulted, or approached, apart from him organising that meeting after the letter I wrote to him. We have not been consulted or approached in any form.

**Mr WILLIE** - How does that make you feel?

**Mr ROE** - To be honest, really disgusted. This is our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary coming back from Vietnam. I am not going to go into what happened when we came back from Vietnam, I think you are all aware of that.

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I also sit on the national board of the Vietnam Veterans Association. On the mainland a lot of RSLs did not let the Vietnam Veterans lead the march. Now you think they would do that. Down here - I won't go into details, but it did not happen here apart from the Vietnam Veterans ended up with their motorcycles there. The Government always says about the RSL - I am an RSL member, I am an ex-RSL State President, they do fantastic work, but the RSL does not speak to the Vietnam Veterans Association.

We are pretty unique. When we set ourselves up, back in the early 1980s, it was purely to look after the Vietnam Veterans returning from the Vietnam War who were presenting with a whole range of medical, mental and other physical issues, and then later on their children started presenting. We look after our Vietnam Veterans types of things. We will always feel it important we have our own voice and no-one else speaks on behalf of our cohort of veterans. I do get upset sometimes and my wife has to keep telling me to, just calm down, it's the RSL, they're a peak body. I got them a peak body when I was at the RSL. I would like the Government to include the Vietnam Veterans, because there are only a handful of WWII veterans still around in Tasmania today; most of them are in nursing homes, or whatever, obviously their health they cannot do what they used to do.

Just about every veteran is a Vietnam Veteran, apart from our contemporary veterans who are starting to be integrated in the RSL, which is fantastic. To not recognise, or have the courtesy, apart from the RSL, but to invite the Vietnam Veterans along and some other veterans, of ex-service officers to have their input, is pretty disappointing.

**Mr WILLIE** - Has there been any engagement from the AFL. We have just had the Anzac Day game and the AFL prides itself on its engagement with veterans. Have they engaged with veterans in Tasmania?

**CHAIR** - Vietnam Veterans.

**Mr ROE** - No, no.

**CHAIR** - I will go to Meg and get back to you - or was it on this?

**Mr WILLIE** - Along similar lines.

**CHAIR** - I will go to you.

**Ms WEBB** - My questions were along similar lines. The only one I would just pick up on is, in relation to the concerns you expressed to the Government about the site lines and about impact on the site from crowd movement and carparking, those sorts of things, other than the verbal briefing you have not received anything in writing to respond to those concerns raised? Just verbal reassurances without actual tangible detail attached to them?

**Mr ROE** - Correct. We have not been consulted.

**Ms WEBB** - I have a different question but if you want to stay on that same area.

**CHAIR** - I will go to Shane and come back to you in a minute.

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**Mr ROE** - Sorry, I was invited by the Labor Party, Jen Butler, who is the shadow Veterans' Affairs minister. Labor was going to ask a number of questions and they invited me along probably about a month and a half ago. I sat in the gallery while they answered the questions type of thing, so those were the only questions in Parliament.

**Ms WEBB** - Were you satisfied with the answers that were provided in that format?

**Mr ROE** - Well, I think there was just a lack of detail again, with no design or plan or idea of what is actually going to go in there and how it is going to look, the height, whether it is concrete or is going to be made out of wood or some other material - it just wasn't available.

**Ms WEBB** - Do you feel like it was confirmed that there would be car parking that would happen on the Cenotaph area, the grass area there? Was it confirmed to you that that was part of the plan for dealing with parking at the site?

**Mr ROE** - No, we've heard nothing about parking, it's only an assumption on our part, based on previous other events that have happened in that area when people park up there. I would suggest that's what's going to happen, unless they address it, which they probably will, but at the moment we have no idea where they are going to park, so we're just assuming that if they are going to park up there it is going to cause some problems.

**Ms WEBB** - A lot of people moving through the area.

**Mr ROE** - It will be crowds of people. It won't be one or two or three. It will be crowds of people and we've seen what crowds can do.

**Dr BROAD** - In this briefing that you had on 20 December [2022], do you think there was some attempt to almost buy you off with offers of a museum, or a 'what can we do for you?' type of conversation?

**Mr ROE** - Absolutely. That's the feeling we walked away from that meeting with.

**Dr BROAD** - That they were trying to buy you off?

**Mr ROE** - Yes. Apart from the Derwent ferry and the light rail, which we have no issue with - I think most Southern Tasmanians would like to see a light rail system out there, but it was disappointing to hear about two weeks after that on the TV news or somewhere Michael Ferguson came out and said light rail is dead, it's not going to happen. Here we've got the director of the major stadium saying there might be a light rail system out there and the Minister is saying no, it is dead and is not going to happen. Nobody knows what's really going to happen.

**Dr BROAD** - You talk a lot in your submission about the sacred nature of the site. Do your mainland colleagues have any view on this as well?

**Mr ROE** - I think any veteran, mainland or not, would have similar concerns about the impact a stadium might have on that area. Earlier this year, you may know that Cripps put out their ANZAC biscuit tin commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary for Vietnam Veterans. Hayden Gillbank, the person whose photo is on there, he and I served in the same town and he

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came down from New South Wales for the launch. We spoke about this and he is of the same view. I think all veterans would have the same view.

This Hobart Cenotaph, and any cenotaph, are a tomb for our forefathers who went off to the Boer War, World War I, World War II, were killed and their bodies were not repatriated back to Australia to be buried in cemeteries. So for the families of those who have lost loved ones, that cenotaph represents their tomb and a place where they can go and spend some quiet contemplation and reflection, and pay their respects to their great-grandfather or husband or brother or uncle or daughter or sister who unfortunately, serving this great nation of ours, have paid the ultimate sacrifice.

It is not just bricks and mortar. It represents Anzac Day, Remembrance Day, whatever. It is very symbolic and has cultural significance to not only the veteran community but also to families. You people may have had family members who have served this great nation as well. If they were killed in a war situation and their bodies are not back here, it gives their families a place to go.

**CHAIR** - Terry, do you think there's any way that we can get both, like have a stadium there that would not impact on the Cenotaph and that area, acknowledging that your members support Tasmania having an AFL team, so that's the fight that should be absolutely had, but is there any way, or is it just that it can't occur here? If we need a new stadium - and we could argue whether we do or don't - would it have to be somewhere else other than there, or can you see a way to make it work?

**Mr ROE** - Our association would like to see it somewhere else. If a stadium has to be built, and we don't agree that one needs to be built, but if it has to be built I'd like to see it built somewhere else, on top of the Domain, or whatever it's called up near the TCA cricket ground in that area with vast, open space for parking available.

We're against the stadium. We've had AFL-approved games for the last 23 or 24 years in Tasmania. We've got Hawthorn's home ground up at UTAS stadium and the Kangaroos over at Bellerive. The AFL have approved games to be there. You remember the recent Gathering round in Adelaide. There was a number of games played outside of Adelaide, at Mount Barker with the Gold Coast Suns. I've never been there, I've just seen it on TV. I was looking at that and the Mount Barker games obviously were approved by AFL to play games there. It was suitable. From what I could see on the TV their facilities were not up to what the facilities are at UTAS or Bellerive. I know Bellerive has an issue with parking and that type of thing, but for 20-odd years the AFL has approved games to be played there.

Let's put the money into developing those two grounds and put the money that's been talked about into fixing the obvious - housing, health, and get this light rail and water taxis, and put it where it's going to be there for the next 100 years that people are going to benefit from, instead of a stadium which is just going to be divisive.

What happened to the indigenous truth and reconciliation park and the Eden project and all those other lovely things that would attract people there, all sorts of people, not just AFL football followers, but all sorts of people from different cultures and different interests? Make it a real people place. The AFL just seems to have the government held to ransom - you know, if you want a team then you've got to build a stadium and build it there. Two or three years

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ago that wasn't the case. It was we're going to get our own licence, fantastic, but now we've got to have a stadium - and you're right, it wasn't at Macquarie Point.

**CHAIR** - This is not strictly under our terms of reference, but you would have seen in the media an alternative proposal. There's been a number of master plans over the years for Macquarie Point. You talked about how you were sort of offered sweeteners to accept the stadium. Obviously something needs to happen on the site. It does need development but there's been work in progress, albeit slow, to get there. What do you see from the veterans' point of view, being so close to the Cenotaph and with all the attributes you've described there, what do you think is important?

**Mr ROE** - I think the RSL would like to move into that area so all their veterans can go to one place, under one roof, and get a whole range of services they need. I'm including the families, the wives and partners of veterans as well. They can get their advocacy, they can get their claims and things sorted out, and be pointed in the right direction.

Obviously, the Cenotaph must be protected. I'd like to see an exclusion zone around it type of thing - 200 metres in all, north, east, south, west.

**CHAIR** - From the Cenotaph itself?

**Mr ROE** - Yes, because you remember a number of years ago, Dark Mofu had that light thing sitting up there in the forecourt, and it looked fantastic - I went up there - but with those numbers of people around there, I just worry about preserving integrity and nothing gets damaged now that we've got that lovely Eternal Flame there. I would like to see an exclusion zone around there where you can't put things within 200 metres of it so that it is preserved and protected.

From a Macquarie Point type of thing, as I said, if they are talking a museum of some sort then a very scaled-down museum of the Australian War Memorial but Tasmanian-focused because we have such a rich history of military service and there are lots of stories to be told. If you look at any honour board or cenotaph, the names, there is a story of love and loss that needs to be told. From a veteran's point of view, they could do some sort of museum there and perhaps, with all due respect to our military people up the road, that museum could be incorporated to make it really world class and build on what is already there. It might make it more available and easier to access for people visiting the state not only from the mainland but internationally. I would like to see something for the Indigenous people put there because that is very important, and a mixture of other businesses, arts or cafes or restaurants.

The other thing that is talked about with the stadium, that they will put conference facilities and meeting rooms and things, incorporated into it. That is pretty good but I was thinking, what about the places where they have been meeting now? They are all going to lose out. All of these facilities that host fairly large meetings, conferences, from Antarctica, that bring international people to Tasmania, to Hobart. If they now suddenly build one incorporated into Macquarie Point then those establishments that already provide those facilities are going to miss out. The same as the corner coffee shop, the little restaurant that might be near UTAS or Bellerive Oval.

I do not know if housing is the right fit for Macquarie Point but I certainly think it needs to be people-orientated and certainly build something in for the veterans as well. To link that



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Cenotaph precinct area to that would be fantastic. There are already steps up there and it also leads itself very nicely into the Soldiers Memorial Avenue as well. That finishes at the Cenotaph. As you know, there are planted trees and things there. If you just go down into Macquarie Point, if there is a facility there for veterans, that would be absolutely fantastic.

**CHAIR** - Terry, during the various iterations of the Macquarie Point site, through the Macquarie Point Development Corporation, are you aware of whether the RSL has ever been engaged through that process, in the development of that site? Do you know whether the Vietnam Veterans Association has been engaged by them?

**Mr ROE** - No. I understand the RSL would like to move there and at one stage I did see some plans that the CEO John Hardy - and he and I meet up about once a month over coffee and chat about veterans' things and what is happening. They were hoping to have some space there for the RSL Tasmania to move into.

**CHAIR** - How long ago was that discussion?

**Mr ROE** - That was probably 18 months ago.

**CHAIR** - Well before the stadium proposal?

**Mr ROE** - Before the stadium, yes.

**CHAIR** - In the previously approved master plan.

**Mr ROE** - Yes, I think that is right.

**CHAIR** - Yes. The RSL, and not the Vietnam Veterans, were directly engaged by the Macquarie Point Development Corporation to discuss that. Is that right?

**Mr ROE** - I think so. I am not 100 per cent certain because I was not involved, but I presume they would have been. I saw some plans, I think they are on the top-level or something like that and it was going to be a place, where, under one roof you would have all the service organisations, TPI, ADF association and Soldier On and other places, all under the one roof. The veteran or a wife or partner could go into one place and get all their issues sorted or seen to instead of going here, there and everywhere throughout Hobart, different suburbs.

As I said, when I was involved with the RSL, I managed to get the peak body status and I totally agree with that. It could happen that all the SOs come under one roof, I think it would be fantastic, call it a hub, or whatever. It would be great, particularly from a veteran's point of view, because one of the problems with veterans is that they just do not know where to go to get help.

**CHAIR** - So, when you had the meeting with the Andrew Finch and there was that, 'we will look after you' type of thing, was that a key focus, a veterans' hub, to call it something, or was that vision by him to be fitted in amongst the stadium?

**Mr ROE** - I think he was suggesting ideas that might happen because he was very open and upfront. He said we do not have plan designs, do not know a lot of things about the shape,

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size, or whatever. He said that it is going to have a roof, but it would not impact on the view. He said these are all possibilities that could be factored into the design.

**CHAIR** - So, clearly, at that point, it was a roofed stadium?

**Mr ROE** - Yes, it was, absolutely.

**CHAIR** - A fixed roof, did he say?

**Mr ROE** - Yes, I think so, but I had with me another Vietnam veteran, John, and we really quizzed him on that. You have the outline of your stadium and then you will have huge light towers to light it up and they will not protrude out of the roof, so it is going to be a significant height. As I said, I am not in the engineering game but it does not seem feasible to me that it would not impact the Cenotaph.

**Dr BROAD** - So, despite those concerns, that are well founded, given the height of the light tower, the argument was still put that it will not be very high?

**CHAIR** - Will not impose on the view?

**Mr ROE** - That is what he said, yes.

**Ms WEBB** - Picking up on that idea on whether you were consulted on previous planning for Macquarie Point, housing had been included in previous master planning around Macquarie Point, you mentioned you were unsure about the fit for housing. We have just heard this week that alongside a stadium plan, there is a plan to put some significant housing development over at Regatta Point, just across the other side of the Cenotaph area. Is that something your group would have concerns about, placing housing there? There would be some transit issues potentially around and through the Cenotaph area.

**Mr ROE** - Because it has just recently become known, our next Council meeting is 28 May [2023], after I come back from Canberra. We will be discussing that then, but that might throw up some more issues and problems about preserving the integrity of that whole area.

**Ms WEBB** - Were you aware of the plans for housing in that Regatta Point area prior to it coming into the media this week?

**Mr ROE** - No.

**Ms WEBB** - Right.

**Mr ROE** - The last I saw was - I tried to find it and I am not sure if it was a master plan of Regatta Point and that whole area, was an arena, light rail going out to the northern suburbs, and a mixture of retail, coffee shops, and all for that area. On paper, the plans from Hobart City Council, it looked absolutely fantastic, but I do not think, from memory, there was any housing included in that. I might be wrong.

**Ms WEBB** - A bit of a moving feast: new items seem to pop up each week. I just wanted to clarify that there had not been any prior consultation on that with your group, thank you.

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**Mrs ALEXANDER** - Terry, firstly, from a personal perspective, thank you very much for your veterans for what they have done for our country and their service. I wanted to say that. From the meeting you had on 20 September [2022], have you received any other correspondence following all those ideas that were potentially discussed? Have you heard anything back to follow up?

**Mr ROE** - No, I have not, apart from the Premier's letter responding to our written letter on 7 December [2022], we have received nothing, our association. We have not received a reply from the Prime Minister - not that I expected one but I thought I might have an acknowledgement that he received the letter but, no.

**Mrs ALEXANDER** - Around issues of mental health and homelessness for Vietnam veterans and their families, is the State Government engaging with you on those issues at all?

**Mr ROE** - No.

**Mrs ALEXANDER** - Okay.

**Mr ROE** - If I can digress on that a little, on the national level and also down here, one of our focuses is now going into our elderly Vietnam veterans transitioning from their own home when they get to that point in their life and they have to go into a nursing home. Our concern is that the nursing home or facility may not be aware that this is a veteran because he may have some mental issue because of his age and may not make it known that he is a veteran. So they miss out on some entitlements, and the establishment may not be aware he is a veteran and not get all the entitlements that particular veteran is entitled to. That's a real concern for us at the moment and it is one of the things we have taken up.

**Mrs ALEXANDER** - I was interested because, obviously, the issues that you have identified are quite complex, especially around those Vietnam veterans transitioning to aged care or other supplementary support. I was interested in looking at the amount of money that has been talked about around the stadium if a small amount of that would be allocated for those needs that you have identified to support the veterans, and how the impact would be in terms of it.

**Mr ROE** - Yes, you're right. It's a very complex situation because every veteran is different from the next veteran. Their circumstances are different and their requirements and what their needs are will differ - where they served; whether it's an operational service overseas somewhere in a conflict area or in Australia.

The federal government and the Department of Veterans Affairs throw millions of dollars into the veteran space, which is absolutely wonderful, but with the individual veteran, it is about education and helping them find out where they need to go to get the help that they need because some of them do not know.

You might find that strange, and I find it strange sometimes, if they spent 10 or 11 years in the military. DVA has been around for a long time and their mates are probably dealing with some issues and they just don't know where to go or won't go for whatever reason until,

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sometimes it is a bit too late. I think that education is a big part of this and making those services more readily known and easier access for the veteran.

This is where the RSL takes the lead. They've been doing it for a long time, trying to set up an avenue for veterans to make it easier for them to access those services as long as with the establishment that the Vietnam veterans set up back in the 1980s - the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service which is now known as Open Arms Veterans and Families Counselling - but there's always more to do because every veteran is different. I know I am going off the side here, Chair, a little but with the escalation of what's happening in the Pacific area and people are saying we might be going to war within five years, and we're going to increase the size of the military, I wonder if those services - Open Arms and the Department of Veterans Affairs - are going to be equipped to be able to handle that influx of people and the influx of issues that veterans are going to present with. That's a thing that we're taking up - not only here in Tasmania to a certain degree but particularly on a national level. We're certainly lobbying ministers about making sure that DVA and Open Arms can have staff and resources ready to meet those additional demands which are going come.

**Mrs ALEXANDER** - Thank you very much.

**Dr BROAD** - You talked about the response that you've had from the Premier to your letter. What about the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Guy Barnett? Have you had any communication from him? When would be the last time that you've met with Guy Barnett?

**Mr ROE** - I could tell you from my diary. I think it was in Parliament, after this meeting I am meeting with Justin Derksen, his PA, to have a coffee every time I go into town, if he is available, we catch-up and I give him an update on what is happening in our area. Guy came out for about 10 minutes and I forget the lady's name who is involved with the stadium, or the Macquarie Point Corporation but she was there as well -

**CHAIR** - How long ago are we talking?

**Mr ROE** - Probably a month and half - two months' ago.

**CHAIR** - Anne Beach?

**Mr ROE** - It could be, it could have been her - but basically saying they will keep us, not involved, but they would consult with us. But, as I have said, we have not been consulted. Guy has not approached us on a formal basis to attend a briefing or a discussion.

**CHAIR** - You know Mr Barnett is the minister responsible for Macquarie Point and also housing. The Macquarie Point Corporation fits under his purview and also, as you know, as Minister for Veterans' Affairs. Through this whole process and when the decision was made, or the announcement was made about the stadium there has been no contact right through with reaching out to the Vietnam Veterans?

**Mr ROE** - Certainly not through me. We have five -

**CHAIR** - You are the head of Vietnam Veterans?

**Mr ROE** - Yes, I am the State President.

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**CHAIR** - You would expect to be the person, yes.

**Mr ROE** - Absolutely, yes.

**CHAIR** - Does that bother you?

**Mr ROE** - It does, it really does. As I have said, Vietnam Veterans are probably the largest cohort of veterans in Tasmania, apart from our younger contemporary veterans. They keep going to the RSL, which I accept are the peak body, so they are the person they are dealing with, but they do not speak for us. I have had this conversation with the CEO and also Barry. I tried to explain to them about why we were set-up in the first place and what we do. There are a lot of things in the veteran area we do not get involved in because it involves younger veterans, but if there is an overlap where it does - an entitlement, or it might roll-over into effect the Vietnam Veterans - then we do step in and become involved.

**CHAIR** - It does seem, from the evidence the RSL provided to the Committee, that there has not been a lot of proactive engagement with RSL either about the proposed stadium.

**Mr ROE** - Yes and I said to John, it would be nice that instead of just saying the RSL of Tasmania, I think the reporting would have more gravitas or importance if the RSL or the Airforce Association, or the CPI Association, or the Vietnam Veterans Association. Instead of just having one veteran body, but named a few of them would add more weight to the argument. I have a lot of respect for the RSL and the people who are there, but I do not know if they are consulting widely with other (indistinct) and getting an opinion, or is it just from within the leadership group of the RSL. I just do not know because I am not close to it anymore.

**Dr BROAD** - The evidence was that they went out specifically to all the sub-branches and had the discussion with the sub-branches and came to the point of view that they do not have the information they need to be able to make -

**CHAIR** - That is why it took a while to actually make a formal statement because they did engage with all the sub-branches.

**Mr ROE** - Yes, as I said, I was lobbying John last year to come out and put something in writing. He kept saying, 'We don't have the information'. I said, 'You don't need the information, mate. If the stadium is going to be built there you either accept that it's going to have an impact on the Cenotaph or you don't'. That is the position our association, the Vietnam Veterans, took. Obviously, we did not know the design, or the height, or whatever but we certainly knew there was going to be an effect, an impact on the Cenotaph, whether it is just people transitioning through there to get to their event or back to their cars or the visual impact.

**CHAIR** - As the head of Vietnam Veterans in Tasmania, have you engaged with Vietnam Veterans all around the State? In some respects, some may see it as a local issue. It is impacting on the Hobart Cenotaph. It is not impacting on the Burnie, Devonport, Smithton, or Bicheno Cenotaph. Have you talked to the members around the State to see what their views are?

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**Mr ROE** - I have spoken to our Council members. We have five sub-branches, if you are not aware, Vietnam Veterans sub-branch - there is one in Burnie, East Coast at St Helens, Mersey Leven at Devonport, Launceston, and Greater Hobart. Our meetings are the presidents of those, and they normally take an executive member. It is through those people we have certainly discussed it at length, but I have not gone out to their members or whatever.

**CHAIR** - But they have.

**Mr ROE** - I hope they have. I trust that they have.

**CHAIR** - When I was doorknocking I came across some veterans. They have a similar view but I wondered if there had been a formal process.

**Mr WILLIE** - We know the history of Vietnam Veterans, particularly the challenging time when you came back from service. If this stadium does go ahead, is there a potential impact to veterans' mental health?

**Mr ROE** - I do not know if that would have an impact on their mental state, Josh. I just do not know. Every veteran is different. Their issues are different. I have recognised, accepted, PTSD myself. I have had it since I came back from Vietnam. But over the years now, I am 73, I have learned how to cope with it, and after good support from Open Arms for example and DVA type thing, I have now managed to deal with it. I still have my own down days, but not as bad as I used to. I just like a bit quiet. I do not think it would have any effect on their mental state. But, I am really not qualified to give a confirmed opinion on that.

We all want an AFL team. If a stadium has to be built, then I hope we will be consulted, as with other veterans' organisations. Maybe, the veterans can be included, or their opinions sought, about some sort of establishment or facility in that area to compliment what is already up at the Cenotaph and the Eternal Flame and the history of that place to be provided for everybody.

**Dr BROAD** - You have talked about the way the veterans used the Cenotaph as a place of quiet reflection. Is that something you have done yourself, that you have been up there at times, when you need that, you talked about needing space and needing quiet? Has that been part of your strategy to deal with your PTSD?

**Mr ROE** - That has, absolutely. Even though I live at South Arm, I come into town on a semi-regular basis for various reasons. If I have an hour of something waiting for a next meeting or whatever, I have gone up to the Cenotaph. Not because of the stadium and what's been going on in the last couple years, but I have gone up there and just sat. Because our forefathers, when they selected that site, they were very smart, because it just offers so much peaceful ambience and the views down the river and to the dock area, and it is away from business, industry. There are no loud noises generally going along unless Hobart Port's working the ship, unloading, whatever. It is just a nice place to go.

**Dr BROAD** - And re-centre or to come -

**Mr ROE** - Exactly. Refocus and just think about certain things. My sister passed away in February. She was on the mainland. I went up there and just sat there for a while. Just thinking about when we were growing up as kids and things like that. As I said, I think

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whatever is built at Macquarie Point, we have to be very mindful and respectful that place is preserved and protected for the next 200, 300-odd years. Who knows what might be developed up there going forward, up around the Cenotaph, what might be added to it?

But that area is the main focal point of Hobart. You can see it from just about everywhere. Driving across the eastern shore and the northern suburbs. Well, not so much the northern suburbs, but other parts of the city. It just draws its focal point. Given Tasmania's rich history and outstanding service to this nation through serving the military, that is the place you go to, for all Tasmanians, not just people in the south. I know communities in little regions have their own memorials, which is fantastic, because of the people who came from that area who went and served. We have one down in South Arm as well. This is the important one: this is the one for Hobart and Tasmania.

**Dr BROAD** - When the first stadium proposal came out, which was out there on the Regatta Ground floating out on the Derwent, what did you think of that proposal and did you take it seriously? Did you make representations about that one?

**CHAIR** - It was going to go out onto the river.

**Mr ROE** - No, we didn't make representations on that, and I'm just struggling to clearly remember it. I can remember the lights going out onto the Derwent, but the short answer is no, our association did not make any representations about it, but had it sort of gathered ground and they were going to move the Cenotaph, then absolutely we would. I think most Tasmanians would have as well.

**CHAIR** - Terry, on behalf of the Committee I'd like to thank you for your submission and evidence today, and Lara did acknowledge the service of all our veterans, particularly the Vietnam veterans, with 50 years since you've returned -

**Mr ROE** - Getting old.

**CHAIR** - Well, we all are. The 50 years can be a proper mark of the service you provided to our nation, so thank you for your service.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**





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**CHAIR** - Welcome to the Public Accounts Committee hearing into the proposed stadium at Macquarie Point in its connection with the AFL licence for Tasmania. This is a public hearing. Everything will be transcribed and form part of our public record. It is also being broadcast. Everything you say in front of the Committee is covered by parliamentary privilege but that may not extend to anything you say outside the Committee. If you have any information you want to give the Committee in private you can ask us and we will consider that, otherwise it is all public.

If all three of you are planning to speak or make comment I ask you to make the statutory declaration and then I will invite you to introduce yourselves and then speak to your submission and the members will have questions.

**Mr TOBY ROWALLAN**, PRESIDENT, **Mr STEPHEN ZVILLIS**, VICE-PRESIDENT, AND **Mr BEN JOHNSTON**, SECRETARY, HOBART NORTHERN SUBURBS RAIL ACTION GROUP, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - Welcome.

**Mr ROWALLAN** - My name is Toby Rowallan. I am the president of the Hobart Northern Suburbs Rail Action Group. Stephen Zvillis is the vice-president and Ben is the secretary. In relation to this inquiry, as per our submission, we have a fairly narrow focus in terms of where we are going to comment, because our focus is on the transport and that is it, basically. So in terms of some of the criteria for examination, obviously we have not covered many of those because they are not our forte or interest. We might make comment on the business case in reference to other business cases and decisions that are made, but otherwise it is really about the transport.

We have been campaigning for the Hobart northern suburbs railway to be returned as a commuter rail service since 2009, fundamentally because Hobart is experiencing population growth and high congestion. In January there was a truck roll over on the Tasman Bridge which caused enormous problems which reverberated all the way through the suburbs, including flights being delayed because people literally could not get to the airport, emergency service workers unable to get to work and emergency services unable to respond.

With this stadium, there is almost no plan for how the traffic is going to be managed, how the transport is going to be managed, and it will be a stadium that will have more people in it than any stadium currently. Blundstone Arena has a smaller capacity but there is already traffic chaos there, so our view is that the stadium will be fundamentally unsuccessful if it does not have rail to move people in and out of it.

**CHAIR** - Should we go to questions?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - Happy to go to questions.

**Mr WILLIE** - Under the current Government, which has been in power for nearly a decade, we have seen nearly no progress along the northern suburbs corridor. Now we are seeing them saying that we need a stadium to activate the corridor. Do you feel like that is a platitude? If they are serious about this, I think the next Budget Estimates year to come into

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the Budget in May will be 2026-27. Would you expect funding for the corridor in that year, given that they want to establish the team by 2029 playing in the stadium?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - I don't know all the time frames and I certainly do not know what their expectations are. We don't believe that the railway needed a stadium to be activated because there are a lot of other benefits that would come with it - urban renewal and high-density housing being constructed in the northern suburbs near the rail corridor. That won't happen without it. It is not necessarily that the railway needs the stadium but the stadium definitely needs the rail.

They've currently have said that their preferred option is a busway. As per our submission, a busway is just not going to cut it. A busway cannot carry as many people; the capacity is not there. The best possible scenario, as per our submission is 8,000 people per hour.

**CHAIR** - With rail?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - No, with a busway.

**CHAIR** - The bus, right.

**Mr ROWALLAN** - So in the best possible scenario, if you have a 30,000-standing event at the stadium, 22,000 people can't use public transport because the capacity of public transport has already been maxed out. Those 22,000 people will be using their cars. Some will walk, some will ride and so on but 22,000 people in their cars is going to create a very big traffic jam.

**Mr WILLIE** - If the Government is serious about activating this corridor, would you expect to see money in the budget and work starting to begin to activate the corridor for the stadium opening in 2029?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - If they are serious about having it all go together, you would expect some work to be done. We haven't seen any details about what they are proposing. If they are serious about getting the stadium done quickly, then the transport work needs to happen quickly as well.

**Mr WILLIE** - We have discussions in private but would you like to see the Government go back and revisit the Cape gauge and what is possible on that? A lot of reports have been done, where the requirement has been that the rail is ripped up and it then goes to a standard gauge which increases the costs. Would you like to see the Government revisit what is possible on the Cape gauge?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - Absolutely. It is quite possible for the existing gauge to be used. The notion that a wider gauge is required is a complete furphy. We are not quite sure where that insistence has come from, possibly bureaucracy -

**Mr WILLIE** - From a Government that does not want to deliver a rail?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - Possibly because they wanted to make the costs look higher and they did not want the railway. They have never seemed like they were interested in having rail. Not sure in terms of why but certainly going for a wider gauge guarantees you have an increased

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cost. There is nothing wrong the Cape gauge, the gauge that's there. Perth and Brisbane both have very heavily used community services on that same gauge.

**Mr WILLIE** - Passenger rail on Cape gauge?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - Passenger rail services on that gauge. There are about 80 tram networks in Europe, which use metre gauge which is slightly narrower. There is no engineering or technical reason why you cannot use the existing gauge. The fastest train in Australia runs on the same gauge. It has the rail speed record in Australia: 210 kilometres per hour.

**CHAIR** - We do not want it going that fast through there, though.

**Mr ROWALLAN** - We do not want to go that fast through there, we don't need to.

**CHAIR** - You would not see it. It would be stopped before it started.

**Mr ROWALLAN** - We do not need to, but it does prove that that the gauge is not the issue.

**Mr WILLIE** - I am interested in the time lines rather than just having a Government say it could activate the corridor. If they are serious, you would like to see them go back to the beginning, have a look at the Cape gauge and see what passenger rail could be delivered on the Cape gauge? And you would like to see funding in the upcoming budget in the Estimates years.

**Mr ZVILLIS** - In regards to time lines and delivery, the one advantage of not mucking around with the Cape gauge that is already there is that you can eliminate a lot of the engineering difficulties that a standard-gauge light rail would cause. You also eliminate a lot of engineering difficulties that a busway would cause because a busway would be wider than the corridor is able to accommodate as well.

**Mr WILLIE** - You would have to replace the bridges and things like that.

**Mr ZVILLIS** - That is right. If you are looking for speed of delivery, the busway will not fit it. The wide gauge light rail will not fit it. Delivering on a Cape gauge, probably the only engineering issues you'd have would be underpinning the track across the New Town embankment, which is sinking. We all recognise that. Probably a lot of the members don't know but, originally, back at the turn of the century, it was a big wooden trestle bridge. When the early Government took over the private rail system, they decided that they did not want to maintain the wooden trestle bridge, they just filled it in with fill and buried it. Of course, a century down the track, that wooden trestle is turning into dust, and starting to cause voids in the embankment. There's an issue with sinking -

**CHAIR** - That would happen whether you put a busway or a train way or anything on it.

**Mr ROWALLAN** - It would be worse with a busway because it would be heavier.

**Mr ZVILLIS** - Yes. The busway pavement would be constantly sinking and cracking all the time, whereas with railway, you can always re-level it, tamp it, and always bring it up to level. They probably would need to do some sort of injection, fill in some of the voids there. But that is going to be a constant situation. Even when you fill it, over the next couple decades,

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it's going to continually descend. A pavement for a busway would be an absolute maintenance and cost nightmare.

**CHAIR** - What's the span of that area?

**Mr ZVILLIS** - It would be 500 metres, would it be, from Bay Street to Tower Road?

**Mr ROWAN** - Something like that - 500 or 600 metres.

**Mr ZVILLIS** - Yes. That bridge is across New Town Road as well. That would probably be the biggest barricade to all modes, it doesn't matter. No one mode would be substantially better except for rail because you can build it up without pavement cracking.

Going back to my original point about time for delivery, sticking with Cape gauge would allow the Government to fast-track the rehabilitation of the railway, avoiding a lot of these engineering issues, which would be a lot more timely for delivery and in time for the opening of the stadium. I think that it would be very prudent for the Government to reconsider their plans and eliminate some of those engineering costs and issues that a busway would cause.

**Mr JOHNSTON** - I agree that, with a willing Government, you could have trains, new stations, up and running in 12 months if you were determined and keen.

Just your point on budget submissions, though, this group is accustomed to disappointment. We have the Hobart City Deal, where \$25 million of federal money was supposed to be matched with \$25 million from State to activate the rail corridor. That hasn't happened. About a year ago a former infrastructure minister, Rene Hiddings, said that there would be train carriages moving a year ago. We are used to disappointment.

To answer the question, yes, of course it should be in both federal and state budget submissions to get the rail corridor going, and have all those benefits of housing and reduces congestion and environmental benefits.

**CHAIR** - If I can come back to our focus on the terms of reference. I know you're focusing on the transport aspect. There's been a lot of negativity about the location of the stadium. You made the comment early on that you didn't believe the stadium was necessary for the light rail to be reinstated, if you like, and activated. If the stadium was not built there, and perhaps built somewhere, or not built at all - one or the other, but not there. Let's say the decision is to not build it there, for whatever reason, then how do you see the progression of light rail if the stadium is not built?

**Mr ROWALL** - Whatever is built at Macquarie Point is going to need the rail. That is our fundamental view. Hobart needs the rail even if nothing is built at the Macquarie Point. Clearly, something will be going in. In order for it to be a success, it's going to involve thousands of people going in and out of there every day. They're not all going to walk from a bus stop in the CBD. If you want to turn it into a giant car park, then yes, they could all drive. But that's kind of wasting that space.

**CHAIR** - I don't think there's a proposal for that.

**Mr ROWALLAN** - That's right: there hasn't been.

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**CHAIR** - No, thankfully.

**Mr ROWALLAN** - When the Hobart railway suburban service was originally closed in 1975, one of the criticisms of the station was that it was too far to walk to the CBD. But, as soon as it was closed, guess what happened? People were parking their cars there and walking in. People park their cars wherever it's going to be cheapest to park their cars and then they will walk. People will walk up to two kilometres from the Domain to the Tax Office if they work there because the parking is cheaper. People will always take the cheapest option.

If you have a railway and it's cheap then they will use it. The problem is it doesn't work quite as well with buses because buses just don't attract new public transport users. We know this. In Perth they had a busway in the southern suburbs. It went in the middle of a highway and was both ways, and it carried about 14,000 people per day. Then they converted it to a new railway - the same gauge that we have here - and it now carries over 55,000 people per day. Where did those people come from?

**CHAIR** - What changed the attitude of people, do you know? Was there any research done around that?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - The research is basically that because rail is a smoother ride it's more reliable and it's much simpler. You don't have the confusion. For some reason buses don't generate transport confidence. If you go to a railway station, you can see the rail is there and you know there is going to be a train. If you go to a bus stop and you are waiting, you don't actually know if the bus is going to turn up on time.

If you want to spend a lot of money and have a network where all the buses are connected online so it tells you that the bus is five minutes away, you can do that and that helps improve that. That would be a good idea, but unfortunately Metro is not going particularly well with their services at the moment. There have been a lot of services cancelled and there have been safety issues. I just don't see that a new bus service is something that will have everybody going, 'This is great', because people are reluctant to catch buses now. This is not going to be any different; this is just going to be another bus service.

**CHAIR** - One of the issues with Metro, as I understand it, has been a shortage of drivers, so with a train, in terms of the number of drivers you would need for buses to deliver the same passenger service -

**Mr ROWALLAN** - That's one of the key things because a rail vehicle has a much higher capacity so you need far fewer drivers to get the same amount of people moving. That's why the stadium needs the rail because a busway is not going to have the capacity to move that many thousands of people, but rail can. Rail can move up to 20,000 in an hour, depending on the type of service, the type of vehicles and that sort of stuff. It is conditional but the same thing applies to the buses. With the best possible busway, you can move 8,000 people per hour, while with light rail or a rail service you can move 20,000 per hour. It's a huge difference. What that means is that if you have 30,000 at your stadium, rail can take out most of them and you would still have buses on the road network that would take out some more people as well -

**CHAIR** - In a different direction.

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**Mr ROWALLAN** - Yes. The public transport system will be able to cope with that amount of people but if you have only a busway, it will not and they're going to be using their cars and that's the problem.

**CHAIR** - A previous witness said - and he was representing the Vietnam Veterans Association - that he had a conversation with Andrew Finch who heads up Major Stadiums Tasmania, the new statutory body or something -

**Ms WEBB** - That's the business unit within the Department.

**CHAIR** - That's right. He said there would be light rail. Then the gentleman also told us that not long after that he saw Minister Ferguson's comment that there would be no light rail. So, in your ongoing discussions with various ministers, no doubt, where do you see this? Is it on the table or is it not?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - As far as we're aware, rail is not on the table - that's the Government's position.

**Mr JOHNSTON** - The most recent media suggests that Minister Ferguson wants money from the Federal Government to pull up the railway. That was the official position, as we understand it.

**Mr ROWALLAN** - That was in October last year when he was quoted as saying that he wanted Federal money to rip up the tracks and that their preferred option was a busway. However, no design work or any details of what they have in mind has been released. It's one lane, so one of the problems is how a busway is even going to work. Are they going to have a tidal busway, where it's one way in the morning and back out in the afternoon with a gap in the middle? The problem with that is then the buses have to get to the other end of the busway via the normal road network. If the normal road network is highly congested, you might not have very many buses on a tidal busway because they can't get to the other end.

**CHAIR** - Isn't that an issue for trains as well?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - No, because the trains will have passing loops, and that's a very easy system; the current rail freight system uses it. They have passing loops: the freight trains pass, it's no problem. You could design that for a busway, but you would need more passing loops, and then you would need a system on each bus so they don't come across one another on that single vein. Because none of that design work has been done we don't have any details as to whether anyone has even thought about this.

**CHAIR** - No idea of cost?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - Well, this is the other thing. They've costed that as being somewhere over \$400 million for the busway and the railway they've costed as being more expensive, but the railway was with that wider gauge, so it shouldn't be as expensive as it was.

**CHAIR** - So how many passing areas are there currently for rail on the route?

**Mr JOHNSTON** - There's none installed at the moment but there are locations with space available.

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**CHAIR** - You don't need to have major structural or capital works to put in some passing loops?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - No.

**Mr JOHNSTON** - It's part of the work but it's part of the new station, so you have an island platform and the train goes each side at, I think, three intermediate places between Hobart and Granton.

**CHAIR** - You don't have to acquire land to do that?

**Mr JOHNSTON** - No, the cycleway can stay, it's all doable.

**Dr BROAD** - If there is a station at Macquarie Point, would that be the terminal station, or would you find a way to come further in?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - We originally advocated for the line to come in and stop at Mawson Place and be parallel to Davey Street. The very first study the Government commissioned back in 2011 or thereabouts actually recommended going a block and a half further into Elizabeth Street so it would be parallel to Franklin Square, and that was considered to have a better sort of connection. Either/or is still our recommendation simply because Macquarie Point, whatever is happening there, is going to need access to the CBD as well. So if you've got a rail service that comes in and stops at Macquarie Point you are then restricting a little bit and the access to the CBD is then poorer, so it should continue into the city.

**Dr BROAD** - That would also link up to the ferry terminal if it went all the way to Elizabeth Street?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - Yes.

**Mr JOHNSTON** - Macquarie Point would be a station, not a terminus. I think one of the many challenges with the Macquarie Point site is its connectivity to the CBD, so the rail achieves connection to the CBD plus the Northern suburbs.

**CHAIR** - If the stadium is built there, and we don't know exactly where or exactly how or anything like that, can they coexist? Can you get a light rail to keep coming through even if a large structure like a stadium was built there?

**Mr JOHNSTON** - Rail is very flexible. I think in Brisbane they're putting an underground station at the Gabba.

**CHAIR** - I don't think you can put an underground station at Macquarie Point, though, because of the land contamination. You can't put it under the stadium because of terrorism risks.

**Mr JOHNSTON** - I think carparking is proposed underground.

**Ms WEBB** - No, I think it's all above ground.

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**CHAIR** - It's all above ground for those reasons.

**Mr JOHNSTON** - But it can be done, it's not -

**CHAIR** - It would fit, that's what you're saying.

**Mr ZVILLIS** - Yes. The stadium could be built over the top of the station. Obviously you're going to have grandstand seating that will be rising up at the outer circumference of the thing, so that creates space underneath that seating and you could have a throughway express station under the seating so all the people, when they are exiting out the exits, could be either funnelled into that station or funnelled out if they wanted to put a ferry dock on the waterside. There could be other people ferried out that way as well.

On the subject of the stadium, I wanted to come back to a question that was asked earlier in regard to if the stadium went elsewhere besides Macquarie Point. Looking at other possible locations, if you went Wilkinsons Point for instance, or anywhere else, you are still going to have the fundamental issue of access. Even at Wilkinsons Point, already now when there is a large game like a JackJumpers game on at the DEC, already the access through the Brooker Highway becomes quite congested because you have traffic backing up trying to turn from that intersection off the Brooker that goes into the DEC. That's only 4,000 people and that is already backing up traffic on the Brooker.

If you had a stadium there that would just multiply. You probably wouldn't be able to have access to the Brooker because you would absolutely gridlock it from end to end. Even then if you accessed it from the Bowen Bridge road you would probably gridlock that as well. You are still going to be having these issues.

In fact, Macquarie Point gives you the option to streamline that. It is probably the best place you could streamline access by pre-emptive planning for relying on public transport, whereas others, for instance if you put the stadium out at Cambridge airport - that has been another suggestion - that would be car-only access out there obviously and you would need acres of car parking. The deal for the football team was contingent on having close access to the CBD and there you haven't got access to the CBD. It would also pretty much exclude anyone that hasn't got vehicular access to the stadium there.

Of all the various options that have been thrown about, why don't we put the stadium, why don't we put it there, the same fundamental issue will apply to all those locations, which is vehicular access or transport access. We contend that if the rail corridor was activated in the correct way to rail, then Macquarie Point would probably have the best access of any location.

**CHAIR** - Going back to your comment about having a train station under the stand, evidence that we have received would suggest that is not an option because of the terrorism risk. You don't have any parking or that sort of transport going under where people will be. If that's the case, let's assume that you can't, is there still room with a large stadium to actually put rail through with all the other things the Government are proposing including the truth and reconciliation art park and other things. It is a moving feast all the time.

**Mr ROWALLAN** - One of the benefits of rail is that it does not take up as much space as other transport options.



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**Mr JOHNSTON** - And it is flexible.

**Mr ROWALLAN** - Yes. There is room. Good design can achieve it, there is space. If they want to have a big busway terminus or whatever, that is going to take up more room and it won't connect to the CBD because there is only the road network, there is nothing else to move and get out of the way. One of the problems with the busway is it would stop there.

**CHAIR** - Where would the rail go, from a Macquarie Point station up to Elizabeth St, say?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - It would go around the stadium, one side or the other, and then go on to Davey St on one side.

**Mr JOHNSTON** - It doesn't take up any lanes of Davey St.

**Mr ROWAN** - No, it would go on the side where the footpath currently is, it would go there and then it would turn in.

**CHAIR** - Where would the footpath go?

**Mr JOHNSTON** - We can send a diagram if you like.

**CHAIR** - I am interested to see it because where are all the people going to walk to the stadium as the Government tell us -

**Mr JOHNSTON** - In Bourke St Mall in Melbourne, for example, light rail shares the pedestrian access through there. It is compatible with foot traffic. It would only be slow speed for that section beside Davey St. It would not be 200 km/h.

**Ms WEBB** - I'm interested if the activation of the corridor is a discussed part of the benefits of putting this stadium in, theoretically. Is it your understanding that there are opportunities for you to advocate into that space then for the rail use of the corridor? Have you been offered opportunities to provide proposals or to be consulted?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - Given that the Infrastructure Minister said that the busway was their preferred option and that they wanted to rip up the tracks, there has been no consultation.

**Mr JOHNSTON** - We have sought meetings with the Infrastructure Minister, and it has just been a 'no'.

**Mr ROWALLAN** - We haven't got any pathway for involvement in that regard because they have already indicated they are not listening to what we have to say. Their PwC report, which was released in 2020, that actually indicated that there were four times as much uptake on high density residential housing construction in the Northern Suburbs, with rail versus bus, four times as much. In fact, the amount of construction predicted for the busway was probably above what you might expect to happen regardless. So, even though they had that in their report, they have still ignored that.

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That brings me to one of the other things that I wanted to bring up which was that it does not seem to be a business case that creates a decision. They do these reports but then they almost ignore the results.

So the stadium, according to their business case, the return is somewhere between 32 cents and 65 cents per dollar spent. The new Bridgewater Bridge which is now under construction, has about 50 cents back for every dollar spent. The railway was much better than that, but it's not going ahead. So, it's clearly not whether a business has a financial benefit that results in a Government-positive decision. It is just that they decide that is what they want to do. We have had a dozen reports commissioned for the railway which have all shown various benefits. There have been assumptions made which could be argued with, there are assumptions made with almost any report, of course, that you can argue about, but it is clearly not about whether it is a financially viable decision because one thing that does stack up is being ignored and other things that have a poor return, a negative return, are going ahead.

**Mr YOUNG** - My question leads on from that as well. Do you know if the councils or if the process about rezoning along the corridor has started at all, or has any of it been done?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - That would only happen once you have a project under way.

**Mr JOHNSTON** - I know with Glenorchy City Council that rezoning is under way; that was one of the City Deal requirements.

**Mr ROWALLAN** - Yes, so, the discussion has been had, but you need to have a transport project under way before investors, developers are going to go, 'Oh yes, this is happening.' It is really a case of needing to have something happening first before people are going to put out their money to change what is currently there.

**Mr ZVILLIS** - Just a little historical aside for members. When the Hobart City Council was building the original Hobart tramways back in the early years of the century, they found justification to build the tramline out to Springfield and up to Tolosa St when it was still farmland. Now, any conventional business case would say why on earth would you build a public tramway into farmland. The whole point of doing that was that it provided the incentive for the land developers to start a frantic home-building campaign through the Springfield-Glenorchy area. So for the whole building of the Glenorchy city through that area, it was the tramway that was the actual genesis that sparked it all.

A lot of the time, providing an efficient and attractive transport option will often be the seed that you need to fire off the redevelopment and the renewal in that area. Sometimes it seems that it is looked at backwards as though you can't really justify a transport route until you've got the population or the density there in the first place. Sometimes that doesn't really work. You often have to get the access there first and then that generates the density that you are looking forward to justify the provision of the transport in the first place.

**Mr WILLIE** - Currently there is no funding for this project at all that's in the budget. How much of a disaster will it be if the stadium goes ahead and this corridor isn't activated? What sorts of things can we expect when a game is on? Two hours to get to a game, people with mobility issues not being able to access the stadium?

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**Mr ROWALLAN** - We can expect chaos. When we had the truck rollover on the bridge, as I mentioned before, it was gridlocked everywhere. Every one of the three key arterial routes, even though only one was blocked, the other three were all blocked as well because people couldn't get to them. I would be astonished if they tried to build the stadium without activating the corridor at all but who knows what is going to happen in that regard. Certainly, as you say, there is no funding for it.

**Mr WILLIE** - There is \$25 million sitting in -

**Mr ROWALLAN** - There is supposedly the City Deal. That is not enough to build the busway. It is enough to do some design work I guess but again we haven't seen details. We need to see details and we need to see them pretty soon because they are keen to have the stadium built quickly. That is that decision.

I would have thought it might be better to make sure that we get it right rather than rush because if we rush then we will have chaos. We will have traffic chaos. If there is nothing built on the corridor then it will be entirely the road network that sustains transport to and from the stadium. One of the big problems is if you do have that sort of traffic chaos, for people who go to the stadium for the first time it might be the last time.

**CHAIR** - That is the point I was going to raise. Do you have one game and it is absolute chaos? People in the North-West know about absolute chaos. Do you think that might prevent them - 'Damn it, we will not come down to Hobart; we will just go to Melbourne'. This is likely what they are going to do anyway from what I hear in my community. If this is not addressed and the stadium is built, even with the busway, it moves people so slowly that it is still going to have the same problem according to your assessment. People will say, 'No, I am not going down there'.

**Mr JOHNSTON** - Have a look at our Facebook page because there is a 30 second video there that demonstrates every AFL city in Australia has passenger rail service so our slogan is 'Without rail the stadium will fail'.

**Mr ROWALLAN** - That is our view. We also have copies of the Australasian Railway Association Report, *The Renaissance of Light Rail*. I have enough copies here for everybody I think.

**CHAIR** - That would be great.

**Mr ROWALLAN** - That is where they have investigated in detail the busway versus rail. That is where these significant figures have come from. As I say, the busway numbers up to 8,000 people per hour. That is a generous number given the space that we have and given that we don't know the details. I suspect a busway that was built on that corridor would not be able to cater for those numbers.

**CHAIR** - This may not be a question you can answer but there are others who could: the bus utilisation that they put on the free buses to get to Blundstone Arena when there is a game on there -

**Ms WEBB** - Or the JackJumpers.

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**CHAIR** - That is a smaller stadium so let's talk about Bellerive with a footy match, not that the poor Roos get many supporters going which is a bit sad. Let's say we did get a big crowd, or even when the crowd that has been there, which is probably a bit more than 4,000 generally, how does it work? How many people do they move by bus?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - I don't know the numbers they are getting on the buses. I know they are fairly well patronised and they have to do that.

**CHAIR** - But do we have any figures on those?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - I don't have any figures. Metro might be able to provide some figures, but we are still getting traffic chaos, even when they are putting on these buses.

**Mr JOHNSTON** - I think if they tried free buses and free ferries running out of Wrest Point.

**Mr WILLIE** - They do free ferries for the cricket, the Big Bash, from the ferry terminal.

**Mr JOHNSTON** - It's still chaotic.

**Mr ROWALLAN** - It is still difficult. The record attendance was 18,000 at Blundstone Arena. I don't know what the traffic was like after that. I daresay it wasn't great. This begs the question: how many people are we going to have at the stadium? They have given us 23,000 seated and 30,000 standing events. Standing events are going to be pretty few and far between but even so you only need it to go badly once, as you say, and then it might be very difficult to get a return event.

**Ms WEBB** - I'm interested because the phraseology around 'activation of the Northern transport corridor' is a little bit euphemistic. I'm wondering whether you have an indication from the local communities, particularly that are along that corridor, what is their understanding of 'activation'? Are they expecting that to mean buses or are they expecting that to mean rail? Do you have any community surveys on that?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - A number of polls have been conducted and they are overwhelmingly in favour of rail. That's what people have wanted. We're talking more than 70 per cent in favour of rail.

**Ms WEBB** - Do you think when that term is used, this 'activation of the Northern transport corridor', do you think when people hear that they think that means rail?

**Mr JOHNSTON** - I think it was a suitably ambiguous term, to be honest, but the community want rail and, as Toby said, and consistent surveys have shown overwhelming support for rail on the rail corridor.

**Mr ROWALLAN** - As I say, buses just do not attract new public transport users. There's going to be no - well, there might be some - but there's going to be very little interest in a new bus service. That's all a busway will be seen as - another bus service. Not something new, not something that's going to change what we have, because the capacity is not there as well. It's not going to generate that interest anyway.

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The other problem is that the corridor, the railway - it's currently a railway, except at each end - but the railway crosses the road at a number of spots. If you have a busway doing that, in order to match the capacity of rail, or even try to match the capacity of rail, you need a lot of buses. If those buses have priority over the road, like the rail currently does, then it's going to stop the traffic on roads like Albert Road and Derwent Park Road quite frequently. That's going to cause further disruption on the road network. The rail would not disrupt that nearly as often because you don't need as many vehicles to get that same number of people across.

That's where the details haven't been investigated properly as to whether a busway is actually valid or not. I don't think the Government has even considered that. All they have considered is rail is slightly more expensive therefore we don't want to do it.

**Mr ZVILLIS** - Which was only considered on the wide-gauge version. There's been an absolute resistance to re-cost it on the existing gauge, as I say, which is perfectly valid for Perth, valid for Brisbane, it's valid for Auckland and Wellington. It's valid for metro transit all through Japan. Japan has the same gauge except the Shinkansen, which is wider, because that's at a higher speed. If it's fine for the Japanese to find transit on the same gauge, there is no reason why - we were pushing to try to find the reason for going to wide standard gauge and the only reason that was put forward was, 'It would be easier to order the vehicles,' because most vehicles are made at standard gauge.

They were obviously thinking of tacking-on orders to Sydney, or Melbourne, or Gold Coast for instance, but when you consider, as Toby mentioned before, there are 80 metre gauge systems in Europe. There's 29 in Germany alone. Siemens, for instance, is one of the biggest builders of light to medium rail services. With 29 systems in Germany, you don't think that they know how to build a narrow gauge or a metre gauged vehicle?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - The reality is that any vehicle order for Tasmania would be a small order and a small order is always going to have a higher per unit cost. So, it's a furphy that you'd save some money by getting standard gauge vehicles. The money you might save on that you lose because you're having to widen the track anyway.

**Mr ZVILLIS** - The problem with widening the track is that the busway does not avoid that issue. That's the thing. In regard to the busway, you still have to widen the bridges; you still have to widen the underpasses. That is a fairly heavy engineering cost to do that and then you've got to consider on ramps, off ramps to achieve that, and it is only going to be between Glenorchy and the city. The Transport Museum has a lease on the railway initially through to Chigwell, but they are planning to extend that lease out to Granton. That is going to still be working as a heritage railway.

If the busway wants to extend, it has to virtually expel the Transport Museum from their premises and then, once you get to Claremont, you cannot really get any further, because the corridor is so narrow as it only goes to single-track after that. You are going to have to do massive reclamation works, especially around St Virgil's and places like that, to build the track out into the Derwent River to actually fit a busway to get around it.

The costs, even though the Government is thinking that busways are going to be the cheapest option, I do not think they have seriously considered what the implications are for the engineering work that is going to have to go into a busway when the return is just not going to be there, because the PWC report states that rail is four times the return. That is based on wide-

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gauge rail. If you went on narrow-gauge rail, with the less engineering costs, the returns of that - well, they have never studied it, so we do not know what the returns would be, but take off all the engineering costs -

**CHAIR** - Have you ever formally requested the Government to cost it using the current gauge?

**Mr JOHNSTON** - They actually did back in Nick McKim's era, they came out -

**Mr ROWALLAN** - No, that was standard gauge as well. That's when it started.

**Mr JOHNSTON** - I thought there was a cost there for \$17 million Hobart to Claremont.

**Mr ROWALLAN** - The cost was \$72 million.

**Mr JOHNSTON** - It didn't include bridge replacement because it stuck to the gauge. It has been done. And suddenly it goes to \$70 million.

**CHAIR** - But some time ago. It probably needs to be redone in light of current costs and things like that.

**Mr ROWALLAN** - If they are serious about moving people, especially if you want to have a successful 30,000 people event at the stadium, they have to think very seriously about what the capacity of the transport systems are and the capacity of rail versus bus. There is a very clear difference. They need to go back and they need to cost what that is actually going to be, and what it is actually going to mean.

**Mr ZVILLIS** - The thing is also about to adequately reactivate Macquarie Point. At the moment, you have proposed stadium, but Hobart was also calling out for a major convention centre, which it doesn't have, it has never had, which actually denies Hobart the opportunity to attract large, major conventions. They will end up going to Melbourne, because they've got Jeff's Shed over there they can have conventions in.

The potential is also for a large convention centre, of course, accommodation, hospitality, to completely, totally reactivate the area for entertainment and hospitality. Again, the rail is the key to make that site a successful reactivation. It has always had huge potential; it is just that the potential never seems to really be pinned down.

I know there has been a lot of opposition to the stadium, but really, if we are going to have the stadium, and it looks as though that's a done deal, we might as well make it - you could say to the critics make a silk purse out of a sow's ear and make it the best you could possibly have. If you are going to spend that amount of money for a stadium, make it work. Because if it doesn't, it is really going to be money down the drain. You want to make that money worth the effort to put into it, to really activate the area properly.

**Mr WILLIE** -The new Bridgewater bridge does not have the rail corridor going across it. On that end of the corridor, will you need to see some action there?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - It would be better, yes, if it had rail. You can keep rail on the existing causeway on the bridge. Given that the Government has effectively already decided

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they do not want it, it's not going to happen unless they change their minds, or unless a new Government changed their mind.

**Mr WILLIE** - It can be retrofitted, can't it?

**Mr ROWALLAN** - It can be done, but it is an engineering question rather than just a choice. If you decided to just put the rail out to Granton, it is still going to attract use, it is still going to be far better than any other option. It will be better still if you can go over the river and if you started by going to Granton with rail, once you saw that it was a success, you would then have the justification to say, okay, yes, let us go over the river.

**Mr ZVILLIS** - Even if the lifting span of the Bridgewater bridge goes, because it really will be surplus because you are not going to need that roadway over there again when the new bridge will have replaced it - it will only really be that narrow rail corridor that will have the gap that needs filling and all you would need then is a modernised, enlarged version of the Constituion Dock bridge. You are probably familiar with the bascule bridge at Constituion Dock that just lifts with a counterweight. This has a railway track across it as it is and that is all it would need to fit that gap, a better version of that. Even if the old lifting span is gone, it can still be retrofitted in a reasonably economic fashion, because you obviously will not need the road, you only need that narrow corridor.

**CHAIR** - We are really getting off the track of our terms of reference. We might wrap it up. We are also out of time. Thank you and thanks for your evidence and for coming in front of the Committee today.

**Mr ROWALLAN** - Thank you.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**

**The Committee suspended from 10:51 am until 11:01 am**





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**CHAIR** - Welcome Luke and Matthew to the Public Accounts Committee hearing on the proposed stadium and AFL football team for Tasmania. We have your submission. We appreciate you sending it. You are probably both aware of the parliamentary privilege protection that the Committee affords you. If there is anything you want to discuss with the Committee in camera you can make that request and the Committee will consider it. It is a public hearing. It is being broadcast and the transcript will be transcribed and part of the public record.

**Mr MATTHEW POLLOCK**, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, MASTER BUILDERS ASSOCIATION AND TOURISM INDUSTRY COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA, AND **Mr LUKE MARTIN**, TOURISM INDUSTRY COUNCIL OF TASMANIA, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**Mr MARTIN** - We thank you for the opportunity and apologies if you were expecting Matt to be here solo. I appreciate the opportunity and I have watched a lot of these hearings over the last few days and I must admit an element of cynicism when the Committee was first launched but I can see what you were doing. I appreciate the responsibility that you are undertaking around what is a significant public investment in a project and also one that, by any measure, is being heavily debated in the community and representing those perspectives. Thanks for the opportunity to be part of that.

We submitted a short submission and tried to keep it to the terms of reference as best as we could but from our perspective. I get this question a lot, but particularly since Christmas: why have we taken such a lead role in advocating for this project? We've had all sorts of comments and criticisms from a football nut, like we all are, to examples of the process that we went through to get to our position.

Most of you are familiar with the TICT. We are a very large representative organisation, with a board of 24, which determines our policy positions. The majority of them are based north of Campbell Town and are highly representative. We have the largest operators through to B&B operators sitting around that table. It is fair to say on any contentious policy issue they do represent a cross-section of the Tasmanian community and industry and we are a microcosm of the broader issues. They do try to bring things down to a pure tourism perspective and take some of the noise out of other arguments about why we would put our support behind any policy initiative or project.

We went through that process late last year when this emerged as an opportunity and brought it down to four key issues for us as an industry about why we support this project. The reality is that for Tasmanian tourism to continue to grow - the state needs a growing tourism industry, our visitor economy, construction jobs, the retail jobs, the hospitality jobs - we need to continue to grow the visitor economy in this state, but the reality is we can't keep pump-priming visitation over four months, between Christmas and Easter. It has been the way the industry has largely evolved for 30 years. We really must maintain sustainable growth and focus on the shoulders in the winter season. There is a variety of reasons for that. Capacity to accommodate visitation but also particularly the amenity of living in Tasmania over those summer months and I don't have to tell you or your electorates about the pressure that we are seeing on infrastructure around summer.

For us to continue to grow it is all about the seasons and the winter. The new T21, the new long-term tourism plan, will be launched in the next six to eight weeks. It will very much

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have a focus on regional seasonality and seasonality in the cities over the winter months. From our perspective, we know major events and business events are the most effective way of achieving that so that's again the driving focus. It's similarly the reason we're heavily focusing on business events in Launceston and the stadium and what it can enable us to do. It's that catalyst to go to a different level as a winter destination.

April tourism is by far and away the most effective major events' stimulus for visitation the state has in terms of its continuity throughout the year. The April modelling shows about \$120 million of economic generation, and that's not to be sneezed at. The reality is that's comparable to the value of the Antarctic and science sector in this state, so something that frustrates me about this is that everyone is talking about the passion of AFL. It is actually also a pretty substantial economic generator for the state and anyone in Launceston knows that.

The challenge of Hobart has always been that we have not seen that stimulus created from the games we've had and we think that's heavily a reflection of two things: one, the content - the teams that we've attracted into the south, but also the venue. Bellerive, for all the commentary around it being suitable for hosting a few AFL games each year, the reality is that it is capacity restrained. It's disconnected from the city and its potential to grow is significantly limited.

The capacity to grow is a real challenge for us long term because if we follow the modelling shown in the AFL Taskforce Report plus the lived experiences of the JackJumpers, the expectation is the memberships or the season ticket holders for this team when it begins will be of a level that's far beyond the capacity of both Bellerive and, indeed, York Park.

From our perspective, to achieve that tourism return of visitation which is people flying into the state to watch games plus people moving within the state to watch games - Launcestonians coming down south or southerners going up north to watch games - we need that significant capacity of the venue to be able to host visitation. We have learnt a lot out of the Perth example where they've quarantined seats for interstate visitors for this very purpose because if they didn't, the reality is the locals would fill up every game. From our perspective looking at Bellerive, its limitation to grow is a major factor in why that venue is not a long-term sustainable option and if you look at the AFL Taskforce Report, it effectively supported that argument as well.

The third argument is the purpose of Macquarie Point and the fact that this opportunity is sitting here right now after 10 or 11 years of, I said a museum full of artists' renderings and visions and concepts that have been pursued and debated and discussed. The reality is it's still sitting there as an unfilled opportunity and, given the circumstances in which we are talking about an AFL team and events and winter seasonality, no other site like that offers the potential to achieve what this does.

Again, from a tourism perspective, we've been passionately looking at the opportunities over the years for that site around Eden, redeveloping museums, public space, pontoons into the water with the various and wonderful concepts and convention centres. None of them have ever progressed because there's never been a proponent willing to commit and there's never been a serious business case put forward to the same level that this stadium now has, and that's the short-term opportunity to actually achieve something on the site. We see achieving this on the same level as we have seen our colleagues in Adelaide and Perth.

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Finally, the fourth argument is we are concerned about the next few years about what might happen to confidence in the visitor economy. We have bounced out of COVID-19 extremely well, far beyond our expectation, but if you look at the forward projections for the economy, the correction that will happen with Australians heading overseas, the reality is that we need another catalyst for growth. What I mean by 'growth' is investment confidence and the certainty for people to make that next great leap as a destination.

I notice yesterday Hobart City Council finally approved a hotel - the one in North Hobart - but the reality is that is the only scale hotel development proposed for southern Tasmania as we sit here. Clarence Council did a wonderful job of killing off theirs and there are no others.

We know from history that it is a five-year wave before you actually see a hotel from concept and development of approval through to opening. I put that in the context about saying we will continue to see growth, no doubt about it, but if we don't see the investment confidence to stimulate the types of capital investment to be able to accommodate that growth, it's going to constrain our capacity. It's also going to put pressure on other sectors and without drawing a line, it's short-stay accommodation pressures at the moment which is the obvious conclusion.

From us, we need another catalyst for Hobart.

The door has been shut on so many other opportunities for the south of the State over the years. We are sitting here today with a different context for MONA Stage 2 which was killed off through politics.

We could talk about kunanyi and what has happened there and what may happen there but the reality is, that opportunity's closed. In the past we've pushed the opportunity for the CSIRO site as the next catalyst for Hobart, as doors have been closed on every single one of them. The stadium, and when we look at the examples of what's happened interstate, provides us with another one of these great opportunities. It is just too important for us to be able to miss the advocacy for.

**CHAIR** - Matthew, do you want to make any comments? I have a number of questions for Luke.

**Mr POLLOCK** - I might just make a few. I think you've covered it fairly well, Luke, but I might just make a few comments more directly in regard to the benefits that the construction of the stadium will bring to the construction industry.

Before I get onto that, you can see in our submission that there was an intent and purpose of providing a joint submission between the tourism and the construction industries because we see the mutual benefits that this type of development brings not just to our industry, but across the economy, and particularly to these two sectors. Between them they employ just over 50,000 Tasmanians. It is a fairly hefty part of the workforce of the economy.

In terms of Master Builders position, a very similar approach that's taken through the TICT, where a representative organisation, employer organisation, represents businesses across the state, our board is representative across all sectors of the construction industry and across all regions. The position that we've taken really fundamentally comes down to: is this project

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and the broader development that it may unlock, in the best interests of the construction industry? On that measure it very much ticks that box.

There are a few parts to that argument, the business case that was published by PricewaterhouseCoopers noted, around 1,600 construction jobs would be supported through the construction phase of the stadium. Those jobs are crucial jobs at a time in the pipeline where we really don't have another major project. Once the Bridgewater Bridge is completed, there's not another large project in the pipeline in southern Tasmania. That long-term continuity in the major project pipeline is the thing that gives businesses the confidence to invest in their people.

The other important part is the workforce development benefits that major projects bring. This is something that, in the past - in recent years we've done a better job. However, in the past, historically, Tasmania has not done a great job of using the major project pipeline as a jobs or skills incubator for our industry. It's been lumpy.

It means that we train a lot of people who go to work in the mainland capital cities, and we suffer from that skills drain. Of those 1,600 construction jobs, we would expect that 400 of them, at a minimum, would be apprentices and trainees. That's a huge opportunity for young Tasmanians. It gives them an opportunity to work on a world-class major project that typically they wouldn't have an opportunity to do so unless they went to Sydney or Melbourne to work in those larger capital cities.

We hope that that encourages more people into our industry. We would expect that a major project like this, given the confidence it gives contractors and employers about that long-term continuity of the pipeline, we hope that we can continue to grow the workforce, which expands capacity across the sector.

This isn't just about building the stadium. It's about ensuring that we have a construction workforce that is better equipped to build the other \$20 plus billion in infrastructure and in the current major projects pipeline, and also in other sectors, to meet or do a better job at meeting future housing demand. We expect just to keep pace with population growth that we will need to build over 3,000 houses per year, each year, for the next decade. That's a step change in the amount of housing that we typically build in this state. These major projects have a really important role in that, which is to be an incubator of skills so that the young guys and girls who work on that stadium, once it's complete, they are the ones who start their own businesses and build houses and other infrastructure.

Other than that, I would note this to reinforce some of the points that Luke's made, we do not believe that there is another credible option for Mac Point. The stadium is the real anchor to unlock that whole precinct, and hopefully unlock a broader urban development strategy behind it, and our dealings with the Federal Government is that that is certainly the intent.

**CHAIR** - I just want to pick up on that before I go to some questions for Luke. Regardless of whether a stadium is a good idea, whether or not it is a condition or not, you are arguing that it is for all the reasons you have outlined, it would not matter whether it was Macquarie Point or somewhere else, those benefits in the south would prevail - am I right?

**Mr POLLACK** - That's right, yes.

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**CHAIR** - Okay, so if there was a stadium built somewhere other than Macquarie Point and Macquarie Point progressed with a proposal they have previously agreed to through their master plan or another plan that has been proposed, then you would have more benefit.

**Mr POLLACK** - I believe that the plan currently in front of us is the most credible plan that we've seen. It has the support of the State Government, the AFL, and we hope very soon will also have the support of the Federal Government.

**CHAIR** - What about the people of Tasmania? You'd have to be under a rock to not realise there is a degree of different public sentiment out there about the stadium, but also about the site.

**Mr POLLACK** - Well, I can only really speak on behalf of the membership of Master Builders, and I can say that in regard to our members, and certainly the work we do through our various Committees and board and consultation with membership, that there is strong support for the stadium and I think there is strong support for the stadium to unlock the potential of Macquarie Point.

**Ms WEBB** - In your submission and hearing your evidence today, you have used the word 'credible' as a descriptor and made the claim you see it as the only 'credible' option for Macquarie Point. Can you define the criteria you are using there in terms of 'credible' and why the previously agreed master plan the Macquarie Point Development Corporation developed through a process, and had authorised and was progressing with, was not credible? I can imagine you could use the word 'preferred'. I can understand it might be your 'preferred' option, but you are saying 'credible' and 'only credible', so that is a pretty strong statement about other options that have been approved and progressed to a point already.

**Mr MARTIN** - If I can jump in, from my perspective on the previous Macquarie Point plan, and if you have been a stakeholder in that project you have been briefed on every single one of those proposals over the years, multiple times. The last proposal I had was about six months before the last Federal election and the concept of the DarkLab proposal, which was incredibly bold and welcomed by everyone, but when you actually got to the point of saying 'Well, how does that vision actually turn into reality' - to your point about credibility - it was heavily dependent on the Antarctic and Science Precinct.

We were told many times that that was requiring a significant Federal Government commitment to move the Antarctic Division on the CSIRO site. We certainly supported that project and saw an enormous opportunity around that that would then open up the CSIRO site at Castray Point, which from our perspective is a truly great location for a public space facility in southern Tasmania. However, the reality is that windows of Federal commitments towards moving those sites have changed. There is obviously a lot of discontent around the notion of moving the Antarctic Division, so that catalyst does not seem credible.

The other pictures that were put to us were around any kind of visitor activation site or component, like how would we get visitors and tourists from our perspective onto the site? There was never a credible proposal put forward to it. There were lots of ideas, lots of big-picture concepts around Edens and massive convention centres, but every single one of them never progressed beyond that concept. The reality is that up until the stadium proposal,

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the only serious, credible project that was proposed at the site were some million-dollar serviced apartments. That would be why I would not see that as a credible thing.

**Ms WEBB** - You mean credible in terms of delivering the outcomes you are focused on -

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes, correct.

**Ms WEBB** - not credible as in possible or toward other outcomes that other people might prioritise?

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes. Maybe credible is not the right word, but yes, certainly in terms of a real, tangible project. I mean, it is not like there was another plan B sitting there for a \$300 million investment for an expanded museum or an Eden or a -

**Ms WEBB** - Well, there was a master plan sitting there, but yes, sure.

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes, but never beyond that and for us, in terms of reaching its point of support for this, it was like up to 10 years and enough is enough.

**Ms WEBB** - So we will read 'preferred' in place of 'credible'. Matthew, from your point of view in terms of credible?

**Mr POLLACK** - Look, I just reiterate those points. Really what we're talking about here is a plan that has funding committed and supported by both State and Federal Governments and other parties. There have been other plans, but to date they're only plans and you can apply the same to the previous master plan under the Macquarie Point Development Corporation.

**Ms WEBB** - So when you say 'credible' you mean it has political support. That's how we understand you to mean that word 'credible'.

**Mr POLLOCK** - And funding.

**Ms WEBB** - Okay, thank you.

**Dr BROAD** - Just along those lines, one of the things that's largely missed in this debate is opportunity costs and you've talked about your frustration about these other projects that haven't happened. Part of the problem there is that the Government hasn't allowed them to progress, or the Macquarie Point Development Corporation hasn't progressed them and so on. Just in terms of opportunity cost, if you had a billion dollars and you wanted to achieve all the goals - you wanted massive building projects to employ people, including apprentices and everything as you've said, you want something to activate Hobart to make us go to the next level of economic development - what would you do with a billion dollars? You've talked about other projects and other opportunities that could happen. Shifting the Antarctic facilities to the wharf there, to Macquarie Point, would open up another opportunity. If you had a billion dollars, would the stadium be your answer?

**Mr MARTIN** - Good question. My response to that would be, if you go back to the original intent - and I think we've made this point in the last couple of weeks, from the very earliest sessions and standing beside the now Prime Minister when he announced that \$50 million - it was always about a place for gathering, it was always about connectivity to the

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waterfront, it was always about a place to respect and represent our extraordinary Indigenous story in a proper and meaningful way and it was always a place to bring visitors and create that next generation for Hobart.

In terms of asking does this meet those criteria, when I look at the DarkLab proposal and compare it to this, certainly in that scope there was mooted a convention centre. We've looked at convention centres with \$300 million price tags. This development, from our perspective, must have a significant capacity for business events for it to truly achieve its potential. On some levels it does meet that test. Is it a place for gathering? Ultimately that's the entire intent of it. Will it unlock and create capacity for that part of Hobart in urban renewal and will it draw visitation?

Could we have created something similar with a redeveloped TMAG? Could we have created something with the full realisation of the Antarctic and science precinct? Maybe, but you make the point that no Government has progressed that to a serious concept, and that's not a criticism of current or past State Governments. The reality is the Antarctic and Science Precinct would require a significant political commitment from the Federal Government that we have not seen any movement towards creating, so it's hypothetical. This, in the meantime, is a real thing that we know from the numbers it will generate will be the equivalent of a major industry in terms of AFL and events tourism, is real in cost and has funding support on the table.

**Dr BROAD** - Basically what you're saying is this is the best you've got, so you're putting your chips on this one, but some of the other projects that haven't progressed could have achieved the same outcomes, or even maybe better outcomes, so the shifting of the Antarctic Precinct and so on would provide that opportunity right in close to town.

**Mr MARTIN** - I could write a chronology of projects like the Cadbury redevelopment that was famously feted and never progressed, Mona 2.0 for what they were creating and I'm still hopeful one day they will realise obviously doing something to treat kunanyi with an element of respect, whether it's a cableway or just a decent visitor infrastructure. There is the CSIRO site and the list goes on in Hobart. From our perspective we know we have a vacuum and in the next few years we have to find another catalyst to enable industry to continue to grow. This is a real-life tangible project with direct outcomes that will spread far and wide around achieving our strategic objectives. You're in reality, I'm looking at it.

**Dr BROAD** - Basically after 10 years of false starts, though, you've got to the point where this is your best option.

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes, maybe that's the credibility test, or the practicality, or the way sometimes Tasmania deals with these sorts of projects.

**CHAIR** - You talk about this as a serious business case and we've heard much evidence to say that it's not a serious business case. There is much lacking in it. It's really just a concept. It's not a strategic, full and detailed business case. There is much missing from it. You also talked about the increase in activity that could occur from that. You made the comment it was a serious business case. On what do you base those comments?

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**Mr MARTIN** - With respect to the process PricewaterhouseCoopers have done, there is a business case there. I think what you are doing is testing that and getting evidence to challenge it.

**CHAIR** - You said it was a serious business case.

**Mr MARTIN** - Well, from our perspective we accept the premise of what has been presented to us. There is long way to go with this project, the development costs, construction costs and certainly in terms of the AFL business case and the team for that. We understand the rationale behind that because we have a lived example in terms of it would impact in Launceston. I guess you are testing that from our perspective whether we are comfortable to develop.

**CHAIR** - This is an arts and events precinct. There are some football games that will go on. The business case talks about international cricket, you cannot play international cricket under a fixed roof, that will take out a few events there. We hear that some of the other major arts events or music events won't come to a stadium down here because it is too far and too costly without a significant sweetener, ongoing costs. That is not factored into the business case, so how can you say it is a serious business case with that detail lacking?

**Mr MARTIN** - You are taking this on evidence. I do not know how many event promoters you have had come in, but certainly the ones we have spoken to, Live Nation.

**CHAIR** - Who have you spoken to?

**Mr MARTIN** - All the major ones, Tabot, Live Nation. To suggest that it is not viable is to suggest they will not have events in Tasmania in a facility.

**CHAIR** - Can you tell us which major promoters you have spoken to?

**Mr MARTIN** - The major ones, Live Nation, Touber is also in the media. I have not spoken to him directly but he has made some comments, not Touber, sorry, Michael Chugg. Why am I saying Touber? I am too young to be referring to Touber. Chugg has also been in the media, obviously one of the largest venue owners is the AFL around Marvel Stadium, and they have indicated there is some capacity there.

**CHAIR** - I am talking about other event promoters.

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes, but other event hosts as well. We have done some research around looking at the Gold Coast model and spoken to Gold Coast councils all linked there from Tasmania.

**CHAIR** - I am talking about its promoters.

**Mr MARTIN** - You are asking me who I have spoken to and I am telling you.

**CHAIR** - Frontier and people like that, have you spoken to them?

**Mr MARTIN** - Frontier, not directly, no. Again, if you want to test it but without quoting from the conversation and putting it on the record, certainly two of them have indicated it can



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be done. Also, critically, the venues and how they attract these events, there will be an element of challenge around Tasmania that they will deal with. They will have to continue to be bringing them in, but the key factor that we are told is that the facilities in Tasmania do accommodate the scale of events that this will open up.

**CHAIR** - Despite the fact that Elton John's performed in Tasmania before.

**Mr MARTIN** - Once in a decade, we have the cause.

**Dr BROAD** - Bass Strait is a significant issue, you lose a day each way at least. Another concert in Melbourne takes two seconds.

**Mr MARTIN** - Any more or less than having an event at Perth for travel costs. You see since they have created that investment, and again, we are not going to compete for the same scale of events they are but I don't know if these are arguments that can be applied without some pretty compelling evidence to show that is a barrier.

**Dr BROAD** - An equivalent is Adelaide redevelopment, they do not get all the big concerts, they get some, but they do not get all. Townsville has been mooted as an amazing stadium redevelopment. How many concerts are they getting despite having amazing facilities?

**Mr MARTIN** - You can keep referring, Gold Coast is now stealing events from Brisbane, Dunedin is hosting Perth.

**Dr BROAD** - That is an hour's drive.

**Mr MARTIN** - You make comparisons: do you get these sorts of events when you do? My hope would be rather than getting a once a decade type event, which is what Tasmania has accepted for generations, we can at least compete to be able to attract the one, two or three major events. There will be challenges around cost structure and the viability of those business cases but if we are able to do the kind of thing that, for example, Newcastle did where they were able to attract events at strategic times of the year, that deliberately draw people out of Sydney.

If we are able to do what Geelong did and attract Foo Fighters, instead of Melbourne, to draw people down, that creates an economic return to us that would be otherwise lost. They are the questions you are asking; test it, test the business case. From what has been presented to us from the feedback of the venues as much as other venues have invested in this, their expectations are much greater of what they have achieved has been enhanced. Moreso, talking to the stakeholders from our sectors in those states, the return has been greater. I will give you an example: Harry Styles in Perth, about 10 per cent of the tickets sold to that event were from interstate postcodes. Now that was a 35,000-capacity venue. If we get that, that is the comparison of an AFL game in Launceston that we pay \$1 million per year to attract one game of AFL football. The business case was there to attract at least two, three or four of those events in a winter season into Hobart through this facility, will create an economic return is equivalent of what we would see from some of those other major sporting events.

**Mr WILLIE** - How important is the roof on the stadium to the visitor economy?

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**Mr MARTIN** - We are interested in that speculation, because the business case has a roof, so again, I have only seen what you have and the business case seems to be heavily dependent on some of the arguments for the venue. I am only going off the speculation, I think we all are. It is interesting we are talking about Federal Government funding, it is still speculation. I would be curious to see whether that is included, but certainly from that perspective, we have always taken the view the roofed facility is a competitive advantage that would be central, whether that is a factor around some of the events that might be compromised by having that.

**CHAIR** - With a fixed roof you simply cannot play international cricket under.

**Mr WILLIE** - Regarding the visitor economy, how important is a roof to your industry?

**Mr MARTIN** - Again, that is included. We have always taken the argument we are getting a stadium for brownball football and an entertainment venue of scale, which is the indoor factor. Curious to know whether that is not a part of the final plans, but certainly from our perspective from what we are making our assessment on, it is the same as you, that the business case does talk about a roof.

**Mr WILLIE** - However, does yours support a roof?

**Ms WEBB** - You certainly emphasised all weather in your submission.

**Mr WILLIE** - Look, the roof had significant risk to the project, that is quite clear when you read the Aurecon report and other things. We have seen stadium budgeting blow out across the country, the Perth stadium started at \$1 billion and ended up \$1.8 billion; we have seen the Gabba stadium and it has not even started yet. You are talking about the benefits to your industry if the costs blow out under existing infrastructure rules. The State Government is liable for those. Would your industry be prepared to take a hair cut, in terms of Government support, if the costs do blow out and it does put more pressure on the State Budget?

**Mr MARTIN** - Well, he is probably the one to ask about construction costs. Look, again, we are making the same assessments. I appreciate we are trying to test these assumptions on the business case, but on face value, if we are to accept that figure which has been mooted for the development, it is a reasonable estimate of the funding window. There are many examples of infrastructure projects in our sector that have come under budget, expanded budget in public infrastructure and I am sure it's similar to other infrastructure programs in the state. I thought some of the comparisons that were seen to be mooted over the last week or so about the exploded costs were on different scale venues, but obviously the roof factor is one to be measured in.

**Mr WILLIE** - It is very unique to have a small stadium proposal like this with a roof, so it is warranted to ask about the risk.

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes, it is. The New Zealand model seems to me the most comparable and similarly CommBank without the roof, the one in Western Sydney which is around the \$300 million mark are relatively more on comparable comparisons. I am not sure if comparing us to the Gabba, an Olympic stadium, or the Perth stadium -

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**CHAIR** - It was not about comparing to the Gabba, it was the cost blow out that has been occurring.

**Mr MARTIN** - It is curious, the fact that those numbers are reduced from the original forecast, the Government has pulled that back a little bit. Again, I am not the construction and engineering expert, I am sure you would know more than I would.

**Mr POLLACK** - I think that is true. There have been examples where stadium projects have blown out in other states. I do not think, at this stage, there is anything that we have been provided that would suggest the budget is unreasonable, but there is no information either way on that one.

**Mr WILLIE** - Does it concern you that the budget has not really varied that much from the original Regatta Point proposal that was done through email with the former Premier on a totally different site? It seems to be the same cost on a different site.

**Mr POLLOCK** - Again, because with the information that has been provided through the business case and other reports through government, there is nothing in there that suggests that the budget is unreasonable.

**Mr WILLIE** - What about building inflation at the moment? How much higher is that? I have heard you talk about it before, how much higher is that than regular inflation which is about 7 per cent? We are talking about 2029, at best, for the stadium to open. How is the building inflation going?

**Mr POLLOCK** - This year it was certainly running ahead of inflation across the economy more broadly. It is pleasing that we have seen some moderation in that. There would be a fair few homeowners out there who would be pleased to see that. The inflation in building materials and construction costs more broadly continues to track above CPI and the broader economy.

**CHAIR** - To what level? Do you know what it is currently?

**Mr POLLOCK** - The last numbers I believe are in the order of 12.5 per cent year-on-year but I would have to double-check that.

**CHAIR** - We'll get that in writing.

**Mr WILLIE** - Would you take that on notice? One last question for Luke. Is your support dependent on the roof being part of the proposal or would you support the stadium without the roof?

**Mr MARTIN** - Our current position is to support what has been put before us and at the moment that is what you are seeing as well. Again, all the arguments about that being an all-weather venue is part of that. If we find out, whenever that is going to be, in the next 72 hours perhaps, that is not part of it, it will be something we will have to look at. Again, for us to know what that means for some of these other events that we hope are hanging on. One of the points I would make about this facility, we have spent a lot of time in the last few months talking to the other examples around the country and this notion of 44 major events, there is

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more yield in a small-scale bespoke major conference for us than there would potentially be in a 10,000-person A-league game, for example.

The capacity to host a new level of business events of dinners that currently we can't host in the State, PW1 is at capacity. The other commercial operators in the State have limited space capacity so it is interesting to look at how some of these other venues are activating those markets. We talk about 40 events a year for this business case. They are major events. Adelaide hosts about 40 events a week at Adelaide oval and they are all levels from conferences to major events and dinners.

**CHAIR** - In terms of the opportunity and credible options, if you want to call it that, if a lower rise conference facility was built there they could cater for large events and notionally not as big as the Convention Centre in Melbourne necessarily, but they could be opened up to host very large events, have separated rooms and that would be much more flexible and could create a much greater return for your sector and you still get the building benefit, why wouldn't you believe that to be a better option for Macquarie Point right in the centre of the city?

**Mr MARTIN** - A convention centre is something we have looked at for years and the reality is there is a cost window for convention centres in the order of \$150 to \$300 million so effectively half the price notionally of what this is proposing. There are examples around the country of standalone convention centres in destinations similar to ours. Darwin is a good example and they effectively sit dormant nine months of the year because the market is quite defined. This is why it would appeal to us if it is an all-weather facility, that it would genuinely be multipurpose. There is also a scale issue, so whilst I say it would be great to get more hosting of those 1,000 to 1,500 space -

**CHAIR** - The return on a conference is much greater than a concert which would be people just turning up.

**Mr MARTIN** - Notionally. I am just saying we keep focusing on the 44 major events a year. They are great but a lot of them will be very much focused towards the Tasmanian market, whereas the capacity for us to create a venue facility that opens us up to being activated on a daily basis for a multitude of different events and purposes is highly appealing.

**CHAIR** - Providing a roofed stadium, the one in Melbourne, that is a dead zone and every day there is not a game on and that is not all the time either. It can have a long period of time without anyone walking around that building except to get to work perhaps somewhere in the vicinity.

**Mr MARTIN** - Absolutely, and that's the exciting challenge that would be created over the next three or four years.

**CHAIR** - This is a roofed stadium where you could have some of the events that you're talking about - concerts - they go to the MCG for the concerts.

**Mr MARTIN** - Some do. Most of them are Marvel but I get your point. The facilities and spaces need to be designed in a way that may have multiple uses for all different types.

One of the most exciting examples I've seen, again overseas, is the Sun Devil Stadium, a college football stadium in Arizona. What they do every week to deal with a very similar or

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same problem about how to activate it on a regular basis, one of the events they have is an iconic night market with movies on the big screens every week. Talking to Farm Gate Market, for example, Maddie, is incredibly excited about the potential of doing something on that facility because she wants to grow those offerings and there is a limitation in Hobart to do that. That's what this facility needs to be if we're going to commit the funds to it.

The last thing we would want, and I think we all agree if it's built, if it sits there once a week and is used for a football game a dozen times a year and five days a week it is mothballs running through.

**Ms WEBB** - To pick up on that, I don't understand how you can make an argument from two directions and they counteract each other. The stadium is going to have facilities to have all manner of events up to 40 weeks if it's like Adelaide of different sizes. Therefore, it's activated all the time. Yet a large conference facility is going to sit there for nine months of the year. Why wouldn't that have a similar opportunity to hold events of various sizes, say, 40 a week plus night markets plus whatever. How can you make the argument that the stadium gets to do that but a conference centre doesn't get to do that?

**Mr MARTIN** - We're making the point that whether it's a stadium, a conference centre, we need to have a strategy in place that activates this thing every week. You're asking why previously we haven't championed a convention centre. The risk is that it's a massive substantial public investment on a piece of infrastructure that is used intensively for about four months of the year and is very hard to activate for the other nine months of the year.

**Ms WEBB** - I don't see how that is different to the stadium because, either way, what you're looking to do is to activate it for the range of event sizes, 40 a week in Adelaide, that effort would have to go to the same extent into the stadium as it would to a conference centre, so the risk is the same, right?

**Mr MARTIN** - I'm not disagreeing with you. I'm saying that's the challenge of this project. I'm not saying why it's the either/or of a conference centre.

**Ms WEBB** - One is not preferable to the other in terms of delivering that range of smaller events or other activities like night markets.

**Mr MARTIN** - A convention centre doesn't enable us to finally get the AFL team to enable that activity.

**Ms WEBB** - Sure, so it's just the AFL element.

**Mr MARTIN** - No, and beyond that - major sport - again, the notion of attracting for the first time in Tasmania Olympic qualifiers for soccer on a regular basis. The notion of getting Super Rugby and the Wallabies. Again, if you have the either/or sitting here right now, they're the tests you have to run.

What I'm agreeing with you on is that whatever project happens on that site, the goal has always been to make it a place that's activated on a weekly and daily basis and whoever is responsible for the design of the stadium or multipurpose facility is going to have to have that as a very clear objective as to how they do that.

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**CHAIR** - It will add to the cost as well.

**Ms WEBB** - Indeed. I need to step out but I hope someone is going to ask about workforce and competing workforce stadium versus housing development over the next 10 years.

**CHAIR** - I will make a note. If I can go to you representing the building fraternity, Matt. To build a stadium that is roofed, that can allow for broadcast with lights and the whole bit, how high will it need to be to be a fixed roof?

**Mr POLLOCK** - I'm probably not the person to ask about the engineering or sound requirements of a major stadium. I wouldn't be able to answer that one, sorry, Ruth.

**CHAIR** - A stadium with lights, okay, to fit a roof over that, how high would that be?

**Mr POLLOCK** - I'm not sure.

**CHAIR** - You would have heard the concerns raised by the RSL and the Vietnam Veterans and those who hold the Cenotaph area in deep respect, as most Tasmanians, if not all Tasmanians, do. Knowing that a stadium with lights is going to be pretty high, do you have any concern about that at all?

**Mr POLLOCK** - I think that those concerns need to be heard but in regard to whether or not the stadium would impede, I don't have an answer to that. I'm not sure.

**CHAIR** - You have no idea how high it would need to be?

**Mr POLLOCK** - I don't believe that that's been published yet in regard to the height.

**CHAIR** - That's why I'm asking you, as a builder. If you're going to build a stadium with lights.

**Mr POLLOCK** - To reiterate, I won't be the builder on the stadium. If that was the case, then we'd all be in a bit of trouble.

**Mr WILLIE** - You'd withdraw your support.

**Mr POLLOCK** - I would.

**Mr MARTIN** - Clearly the planning and assessment process will have to be intense on this, and the designs, which are still conceptual, and I think we would all agree that these are valid points. I'm going to be very interested to know what the floor space is for those exhibition room spaces. I am going to be passionately arguing for some sort of an attraction facility much like what Adelaide and Perth have to give people a reason to go there every day. There is a whole lot of design work that's going to happen in the next -

**CHAIR** - And costing.

**Mr MARTIN** - And costing. Who's paying for what? To Ms Webb's point. Some of this stuff is highly commercial. The scope for commercial investment in this thing that's going

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to have to do, but I think the height of the thing is going to be pretty early in the process, I would hope.

**Mr YOUNG** - Certainty is essential for business, probably one of the most important factors, and again, on the big assumption that the Federal funding is coming. Having a project backed by Federal and State Government, as you said, gives certainty for not only tourists, but more businesses across the board to invest long term. Coming from retail, the thing we used to say is, 'when the tradies have money, they spend', which is good for everyone. How do you think that will help, having that long-term certainty not only for Hobart, but I guess for outside of Hobart?

**Mr POLLOCK** - This is one of the really central themes of our submission, or from the side of the construction industry at least. The long-term certainty in the major project pipeline, is a real crucial underpinning driver of businesses investment decisions in their workforce. When they know that it's not just about next year, but the year after that and the year after that, that they have work for their people, particularly when you're talking about the support required to put a young person through an apprenticeship is four years, having that long-term certainty is what gives businesses today the confidence to invest in those new people.

**CHAIR** - If we need to build 4,000 houses a year, there's a bit of certainty there for the next however long.

**Mr POLLOCK** - There is, but you know, housing is only one sector of the construction industry. If you talk about that in terms of its composition, housing, investment in new housing last year, which was a record, topped \$1 billion, that was fantastic, and it's great to see that we've managed to build some capacity in the industry to deliver what has been a record number of new houses over the last couple of years. That's a crucial pipeline of work. It's crucial that we actually meet those targets and keep some of that capacity there.

What these major projects do is provide a bit of a foundation for the industry to grow skills in those large projects which employ a lot of people, which do fall under the construction training policy. One in four workers needs to be an apprentice. That becomes a place where we can develop and build capacity that then feeds into other sectors over the medium and long term. It's something that is done better in the larger states with larger pipelines of major projects, and we see it. We see the young people who do their apprenticeships on these major projects, and once those projects are complete they're the ones who start businesses and they become the housing builders in the years ahead.

**CHAIR** - I'm sure you, like every other industry, like hospitality as well, are suffering significant workforce shortages as the moment. How do we do this and build all the homes and, I assume, finish the Bridgewater Bridge, and I'm sure there will be others? If you've driven up the Midlands or anywhere else recently, you know there are roadworks going on all the time. So there are a lot of things going on.

**Mr WILLIE** - New schools being built.

**CHAIR** - Yes, new schools, \$20 billion project pipeline. So how are we going to do it?

**Mr POLLOCK** - It's a lot of work to do. But the Bridgewater Bridge will be complete in 2025. Following that project, there's not another major project in the south of the State.

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Having the stadium there to be the next major project in the pipeline once the Bridgewater Bridge is completed gives somewhere for those people to go. In terms of keeping capacity in the workforce, it is about growing the workforce and attracting new people. It's equally about keeping people here, and one of the concerns that we have is - because you see it happen in Tasmania in the past - we're a smaller state, major projects when they come in dribs and drabs or inconsistently, it creates some lumpiness in the volume of work that needs to be delivered. Inevitably, what that means is that we struggle to keep our young skilled people here. We give them an incentive to work on major projects in Sydney and Melbourne and that's one thing that we'd like, if we can, to use a major project pipeline to keep those young people here and I think the stadium is well into that.

**CHAIR** - There are other proposals for Macquarie Point. They are not tiny projects; they are going to take a significant workforce whatever's done there because of the nature and size of the site, so doesn't that argument still hold - whether it's a stadium, whether it's a major convention centre and other things, or not?

**Mr POLLOCK** - It would. If there are other proposals for the site that would attract a large substantial investment then, yes, they would provide the same support. I suppose the foundation of the submission that we've presented here is in regard to a stadium. A stadium would provide that support. It's the project that's in front of us that has support and funding. At least we can say at this point in time, it has the greatest chance of actually coming to fruition and having some young tradies on the ground in Macquarie Point and seeing something come out of the ground at Macquarie Point which we have all been waiting long enough for.

**Mr WILLIE** - I am interested in your comments yesterday, Luke, where you said that you'd hoped that the major content for the AFL would be played in the North of the state. We know the State Government won't set the games and that it's a fixture designed by the AFL. Do you think the AFL is going to fix major content in the north of the State after making this a conditional licence where the State Government has to build a brand new stadium in the south?

**Mr MARTIN** - I'm pretty passionate about this one because I think that as important as AFL is, I made comment that I don't think we've ever really seen the kind of return that we would have wanted for AFL content in the south. Certainly, in Launceston, it is still critically underpinning - I don't have to tell anyone that, we're all familiar with the numbers and have probably been up there to games, so for Launceston to come out of this -

**Mr WILLIE** - It was good when the Saints played up there.

**Mr MARTIN** - The last time we played there, we won by plenty.

The exciting bit about the growing capacity of York Park is that because of the site limitations of this proposed stadium which I understand is the basis for the business case - that is why it's now 23,000 seated and more, the capacity for York Park to continue to grow is going to be critically important. If you believe the projections on the taskforce business case around the numbers on membership - 25,000 in the first year or two - all of us who have any sense of AFL football and the culture of this State, we can all be pretty confident that Tasmanians are going to rally behind becoming members of this thing when it first launches. So, from that perspective you can expect that there will be high demand for those seats. You would hope that every event and game in Hobart and Launceston's pool will create pressure for capacity.



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Launceston's position as the venue that can be further grown is continuously central. From our perspective - and I have always made that point consistently - Launceston can be no worse off in terms of content. My hope would be that Tasmania versus anyone is going to be a really highly appealing proposition for both venues, but you'd hope that within that, York Park will continue to be the true home of some of those larger venues on an annual basis. I'm sure that the AFL will rotate when they do their rostering and they'll get requests from the two clubs. The exciting thing for Launceston will be its capacity to continue to be grown and to become that larger venue and hopefully be the home of those blockbusters in the long term.

**Mr WILLIE** - That's the other factor here too - the visiting clubs are probably going to demand to play in a roofed stadium in the capital city, aren't they, once you come to the bigger ones like Collingwood or Carlton?

**Mr MARTIN** - Maybe, but we also know that York Park has always been considered as having the best playing surface in the country and I don't think Hawthorn has every complained about playing at York Park and hopefully they will continue to.

**Dr BROAD** - The captain, sort of -

**Mr MARTIN** - Ah, yes, the captain. Perhaps he needs to look beyond just what the playing surface is like. That's an issue to work through from a visitor perspective. Again, what's positive about the speculation we're seeing is that the Federal Government is going to commit to the growth of York Park. We certainly see York Park is becoming a much more utilised venue going forward. It needs to.

The expectation will be that York Park would be certainly be no worse off and, again, Tasmania versus anyone will be better than Hawthorn versus Fremantle on a Sunday afternoon. I think we can all probably guarantee that but within that rostering you would hope that over time the blockbusters are very much equally shared if not at the larger venue, which will be in the north.

**Mr WILLIE** - The reality is after a billion dollars of taxpayers' funding there's no control. It's up to the AFL.

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes. You would think we would have some pretty significant bargaining power for the substantial public investment we are being asked to put in to attract this team.

**CHAIR** - That's not how it works though. You know that, Luke.

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes, I do know that.

**CHAIR** - The former Premier, Mr Gutwein had a crack at the AFL after the last draw.

**Mr MARTIN** - I've had a few cracks at the AFL over the current season.

**CHAIR** - However, that's the thing. Even if we spend a lot of money there is still no guarantee the AFL with reward us.

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**Mr MARTIN** - Yes. I think we should work off the premise and the expectation that there will be certainly no less content, if not more content for York Park. Like what's happened with GWS, the long-term split between the two venues, they do take requests from the teams. They always make that point. That's an issue that needs to be explored around how vocal some of those requests from the teams playing down here are, around getting good content into the state. Certainly, from our perspective, we would want to see a very equal share of those major drawing games.

Northern Tasmania, ultimately, irrespective of how much money is spent in Hobart, Northern Tasmania deserves to be the high-end of those first blockbusters because they're the ones who have backed-in AFL football over a long time and invested in their venue. It's the underbelly of their winter economy. Hopefully, with this stadium, Hobart starts to replicate that as well.

**Mr WILLIE** - On another topic, Chair. You make reference in your submission about growing taxation revenue. I'm interested in what taxation revenue you're talking about. The State Government is going to be the major contributor here. We know from the Government's own business case, after \$460 million, they'll generate \$300,000 in payroll tax. We know 65 per cent of the State's revenue comes from the Federal Government through grants and GST and we know the State only generates 21 per cent of its own taxation revenue. What are you talking about there? Are you talking about income tax for the Federal Government?

**Mr MARTIN** - I made the point when I was talking about investment certainty and confidence. The capacity is for this to bring on another wave of investment in large-scale capital across the state, but particularly in Hobart. You're talking about a whole lot of stamp duty and a whole lot of payroll tax from larger hotel operators being created. I think we need to look also the opportunity cost for the risk of a contracting visitor economy in the state. The retail spend flowing back right through the economy, which is not fully captured in the business case and the economic modelling that's been done on it.

What's driven us pretty heavily on this is that we need that next catalyst project to counterpoint what's happening in the North with the *Spirits*, to actually give certainty and confidence for the visitor economy to ride out the next 10 to 15 years, with confidence. We're going to grow. We'll continue to be strong but it's the underbelly of knowing that this is coming and knowing what it will generate for that winter activity and the stimulus that it will create which will hopefully support our businesses to continue to grow and support.

**Mr WILLIE** - Are there any sort of assumptions, or tangible things you can point to? I've asked this question of the Government and they keep saying, 'it's going to pay for schools and hospitals,' but they can't show how.

**Mr POLLOCK** - I think through the attraction of investment and economic growth we would expect to see that there would be a positive impact on taxation. I believe the PriceWaterhouse business case references a projected increase in housing investment potentially in and around the stadium which would really capture most of inner Hobart. The associated stamp duties -

**CHAIR** - Won't it be constrained there with available land?

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**Mr WILLIE** - You're still talking about a very small percentage of the State revenue base. State taxation makes up a very small percentage of the overall revenue base.

**Mr MARTIN** - We could run this argument around MyState Arena project, the Cradle Mountain project, the *Spirits of Tasmania*. Where do you draw the line? Again, from our perspective, we've a visitor economy and a construction industry that between us is about 13 per cent of the gross state product. Fifty-odd thousand jobs are directly employed by the two sectors and we see this as a project of significant scale to keep our economies bullet-proof for the next decade. So you can pick the eyes about where is revenue going to come from, or you can just see it as a significant infrastructure program that will enable our economy to grow.

**Mr WILLIE** - Luke, I'm asking about your submission where you talk about taxation revenue growth and I'm asking you to point to something tangible -

**Mr MARTIN** - Stamp duty, construction, you ask me to put a figure on it, I can't do that. However, by enabling the economy to continue to grow continuously that revenue will kickback through various levels of government. We have seen what happens when our visitor economy contracted during COVID-19, and the revenue that was removed from payroll tax when the visitor economy contracted. You can't assume that we'll continue moving along without investing in our own infrastructure. This is one of many projects across the State that will do that.

**Mr WILLIE** - The best answer the Government could come up with is that the links are tenuous.

**Mr MARTIN** - I respect that. I understand what you're trying to do. Again, we could sit here and talk about five or six other major projects in our sector, and have the same conversation.

**Mr WILLIE** - But you put it in your submission.

**CHAIR** - I just want to go to one other area. Luke, you spoke earlier about Launceston people visiting the south, but what about people on the North-West Coast? A lot of them can't afford the trip to Hobart. You talked about membership of the team. Membership is not cheap. A lot of them, if they are already members of their own team, will find it a real struggle to pay an extra membership fee. Also it's quicker, easier and, for some, cheaper, to get on a plane and go to Melbourne.

So if we are going to attract the numbers that make this an economically viable event and fill the stadium, how are we going to do it? Have you talked to the North-West members about this what they think?

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes. Again, those questions remain. I mean to me that goes to the heart about why the content must be split also in the North to make it accessible. The JackJumpers are an example about why that needs to be critical, to provide some reasonable quality of access for people to see the content, with the AFL teams specifically, and the AFL women's team. Again, if you look at the task force, it talks about three types of memberships: a southern membership, a northern membership and a statewide membership. I think that will be the underbelly of the viability of the AFL team. That's when the taskforce report has been done -

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**CHAIR** - I'm talking about the stadium itself as being viable. If you can't attract the people from the North-West for a footy match in Hobart, or an event, a major event, a show that may also be on in Melbourne -

**Mr MARTIN** - Again, I think you just look at the evidence of what they do. North-westerners are travelling to see events that we have in the South. The JackJumpers are an example of that. They're small in numbers but we've all seen the reports about the families who drive down for every game.

**CHAIR** - Have you talked to your members about what they're seeing and what they believe in terms of people going to Victoria for similar events?

**Mr MARTIN** - Yes, and that will continue, more or less like it will continue to be Tasmanians who fly out of Hobart to see events on the mainland. Hopefully, with this event, we will at least have the opportunity for people to see some of these events in our own backyard rather than the necessity to constantly get on a plane. I had an experience of this, I flew out of Melbourne airport T4 on a Sunday morning when Harry Styles was playing in Melbourne. I reckon almost 30 per cent of the people getting on the Launceston flight and the Hobart flight were wearing merch, and had been at the event the previous night. Surely an element of that market will be attracted to some of these events in the south and the north, when we attract them, just as they do now. My North-West members, they see the big picture, they see that we need to create some -

**CHAIR** - They know it's quicker to get to Melbourne.

**Mr MARTIN** - Absolutely, and a lot will continue to do that.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for coming in. We will follow up on the cost of the building inflation.

**Mr MARTIN** - I will get you a name for an event promoter and perhaps more contemporary than the name that first popped out of my head. I think I've been reading too many Tasmanian media reports, but I'll make that connection.

**CHAIR** - The big ones, the ones who bring the big shows.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**

**The Committee suspended from 12:04 pm until 1:02 pm.**

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**CHAIR** - Thanks, Mr Scullin and Ms Beach, for joining the Public Accounts Committee inquiry into the proposed stadium and AFL football team licence for Tasmania. We know we didn't get a submission from Macquarie Point but as a key stakeholder we have invited you in to provide evidence to the Committee.

It is a public hearing. It is being streamed on our website and the transcript will form part of the public evidence. Everything you say before the Committee is covered by parliamentary privilege. That may not extend beyond the Committee hearing. If there is anything of a confidential nature you wish to discuss with the Committee you can make that request and the Committee will consider that, otherwise it is all public. I will ask you to make the statutory declaration and then invite you to introduce yourselves and if you want to make some opening comments you are welcome to do that before we go to questions.

**Mr BRIAN SCULLIN, CHAIRMAN, AND MS ANNE BEACH, ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, MACQUARIE POINT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.**

**Mr SCULLIN** - You are right, Chair, we didn't make a submission. When the Board looked at the terms of reference, points 1 to 7 are matters that the corporation had no involvement in so we didn't think we could usefully make a submission, but we are here today to answer any questions you have. Without knowing quite where they may come from, if there are things we can't answer on the spot we will take them on notice and get back to you as quickly as we can.

**CHAIR** - I will start with our term of reference number 1, the process to select Macquarie Point as the site for the proposed new stadium. That appears to have been a Government decision, but can you tell the Committee about the process you went through to get to the decision with the most recent approved and agreed to and seemed to be underway masterplan, and what happened when that announcement was made and what communication you had with the Government that decision? Dates of meetings and things like that would be helpful.

**Mr SCULLIN** - In terms of the existing masterplan, that dates back to late 2016 when the then Minister wrote to the then Chair of the Corporation and said that the Government wanted, as far as practicable, to implement the so-called MONA vision for the site. That led to the Corporation developing the masterplan which captured as much of the thinking as we could because the MONA vision in its entirety couldn't be delivered because it went across the port and it wasn't our land and things like that. That's what led to the original thing.

The way it works is that the Minister, under the Act, has the power to give us directions and he did use that power to direct us in relation to the MONA vision and hence the existing masterplan. That direction was then followed with annual statements of ministerial expectations. We still have not received any direction or statement of ministerial expectations which changes that, so at the moment we are still operating on that existing masterplan.

However, four days after that, the Government announced that Macquarie Point was the preferred site. The Minister wrote to me and said that while we are still on the masterplan, please do not do anything that would actually hinder it if there is an eventual decision to do a sports and entertainment precinct down there.

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**CHAIR** - What date was that?

**Mr SCULLIN** - I will just check. It was four days after the decision, which was on 18 September [2022], if I remember correctly, and he wrote to me in September -

**CHAIR** - What year?

**Mr SCULLIN** - Last year.

**Ms BEACH** - The letter the chair received was dated 23 September 2022.

**Mr SCULLIN** - Okay, so those are the instructions we are working on at the moment. So the Minister, in that letter to me, said that if a final decision is made to have a sports and entertainment precinct, then he will consider whether he will need to give a new direction to the Corporation.

**CHAIR** - So no new directions been given and so you are still operating but not doing anything?

**Mr SCULLIN** - Not doing anything that would hinder. So a lot of the activities, whether we were doing the existing masterplan or shifting toward a sports and entertainment precinct, a lot of remediation work will be required for either of those, so there is still a whole lot of work that we can press on with which will not impede any decision, if there is one, to go with a sports and entertainment precinct, but will need to be done in any event.

A sort of example would be that we recently took down the dilapidated CSIRO shed. That is gone and now if you go down there there are mounds of dirt where we are pulling up the old pipes that are in there and remediating the soil. That will have to happen under the existing masterplan or some revised thing to construct a sports and entertainment precinct. Those are the sorts of things that are just carrying on.

**CHAIR** - I understand that in early August 2020, Minister Ferguson announced that the first land parcel on the escarpment would go to market. Where did it get to just prior to you getting the letter from the minister and what is happening now?

**Ms BEACH** - There was a request for a proposal process and Milieu Property was selected as the preferred proponent for that work. We had been working with them on a few things, mainly a project development agreement - so there is a heads of agreement that identifies them as the preferred proponent - but the detail we have been working through is a project development agreement that sets out the requirements we would have around that development and that is where we are up to. That was not yet signed; we have not signed a contract for sale. We are just continuing with them as the preferred proponent.

**Dr BROAD** - Just along those lines, is there any liability to Milieu if it doesn't go ahead?

**Ms BEACH** - In terms of the cost they have invested in the work they have done to date, we have a cost reimbursement agreement with them. That is still in play, but I don't think there is anything aside from that. There have been no development applications submitted, no contracts for sale settled, and the project development agreement was not finalised. It is only

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the work they had been doing to go through that project development agreement discussion and to prepare a draft EA.

**Dr BROAD** - When was that agreement due to be signed?

**Ms BEACH** - We didn't have a set date. We've been working through that progressively, so we were pretty close but it wasn't quite finalised.

**Dr BROAD** - But is that captured by this 'do not do anything to hinder the stadium project', because obviously the two things cannot coincide, can they? Milieu can't go ahead with the stadium.

**Ms BEACH** - Well, we need to understand more about the stadium to be able to make that assessment, but it would be challenging given the space available. So we got those discussions to a point but we weren't at a point where we could agree and finalise them while we waited for further advice whether a stadium would proceed.

**Dr BROAD** - Along those lines, what about agreements with your existing tenants? No doubt some of those have come up for renewal. Does the Government's instruction also hinder what you are able to do there with the existing tenants?

**Mr SCULLIN** - Most of the existing tenants are actually short-term leases as part of the site activation process. As part of that, let us not just leave it all vacant, there are things that we can do but they were all term limited because it was expected that whatever we did, that they would need to move. An example would be the long house; I think it has a five-year lease. It was always envisaged it might be extended for a little while, but at some stage it has to go because we need to remediate the land underneath it.

A lot of the tenants have that sort of an arrangement. Their lease would end whatever we were going to do. The only lease that is not in that category is the lease for the goods shed which is a much longer-term lease and, after a selection process, went to the Hobart Brewing Company. That one would extend beyond and probably, as Anne said, when you see where the stadium is going to go. How big is it, etcetera? It might well mean we cannot go ahead with the lease on the goods shed. Anne and the team have been in discussions with them about how this is all working. They still have a lease and they are still using it. There is an event space that they are running. If there is a decision to a stadium and it does mean we cannot go ahead with the lease, then we have to have a discussion with them about what that means.

**Dr BROAD** - To be clear, that would mean cutting their term.

**Mr SCULLIN** - It may well be.

**CHAIR** - When does the lease run out?

**Mr SCULLIN** - It is 20 years, isn't it?

**Ms BEACH** - It is a 10 plus 10-year lease that commenced in April last year.

**Ms WEBB** - Potentially, considerable compensation required if that was to be broken?

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**Ms BEACH** - It depends. It is very early in that lease and the Hobart Brewing Co. have an existing lease onsite where they are able to still operate. We would need to work that through. We would need to understand more about if and when there is a decision, the details of that decision, the time lines, look at what effort has been invested into the current lease. We will work that through when we know more.

**CHAIR** - Surely, there would be relocation costs they would have to make and knowing the tightness of space.

**Ms BEACH** - It is an events space as it is currently used. Their general operations are based in a different location in the Red Shed on the site. It would be looking at the impact of the lease not continuing rather than an impact on an immediate change to operations.

**CHAIR** - What about the Hunter Island Distillery?

**Ms BEACH** - They are a partner with Hobart Brewing Co. The lease with the corporation is between the corporation and the Hobart Brewing Co. They do have other partners they had considered as part of how they might activate that space.

**CHAIR** - Do they have a presence in the goods shed?

**Ms BEACH** - Not at this stage, no.

**CHAIR** - Are the partners expecting to?

**Ms BEACH** - Part of their proposal was to look at bringing some partners in to use that space, but it is not currently used for that.

**CHAIR** - Does that mean they cannot until this is resolved? They cannot bring in those other partners until this is resolved?

**Ms BEACH** - They had a model they were working to and they would probably still be planning for that. It was not at a stage yet where there was a development application submitted, so it was still in the development phase of that.

**Mr SCULLIN** - They are not there.

**CHAIR** - No, not physically there but there is an intention. The businesses spend quite a bit of money in the front end of these decisions with an expectation looking at a 10 plus 10 year lease that they would have made assumptions based on that. Is there likelihood, not just for the Hobart Brewing Co. for those partners to also be seeking compensation if they cannot go into the building as anticipated.

**Ms BEACH** - Possibly. Our first point of call would be we have an agreement with the Hobart Brewing Co., we do not have a direct agreement with other players. We would be having those discussions through the Hobart Brewing Co.

**CHAIR** - There has been no potential costs of that? We have no idea what this might cost?



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**Ms BEACH** - We have been having ongoing discussions. Straight after the Premier announced Mac Point as the preferred location for the stadium we established regular contact with Hobart Brewing Co just to keep that conversation going. But the board has considered where we are at, and the decision is we will wait for a clear direction on what would be required, what that looks like, so we can then have proper conversation with them about the implications of that.

**CHAIR** - One of the reasons the Committee is interested is that we talk about the costs of the stadium build, which doesn't appear, and obviously cannot, account for the cost you made need to pay to Milieu or to the Hobart Brewing Company or anyone else that may have an interest in this site currently. That is a cost we cannot put a figure on. It may be substantial.

**Ms BEACH** - Not yet.

**CHAIR** - Not yet, no. There was a media release put out by the Premier and Minister for State Growth on 20 June 2022, clearly before this decision was made, and that was communicated with you. It talked about the Escarpment was in the throes of being finalised, it talks about the Antarctic and Science Precinct business case before the Australian Government, the goods shed and yard being leased, the Truth and Reconciliation Art Park co-design workshops. The Premier and Minister's press release also talked about a \$1 billion development and 10,000 construction jobs, which are interesting figures, they keep changing. That indicates that there was some significant progress on some of these things. But you are telling there is no progress really. They are just really early days.

**Ms BEACH** - There is progress in terms of they were well advanced in - particularly well advanced in the thinking on the development they would like to do. But the physical works had not commenced and the approvals were not in place for those works.

**CHAIR** - They would have incurred a lot of costs in getting that concept design, the legal costs, all of those sorts of things.

**Ms BEACH** - That is why we have the cost reimbursement agreement - which is relatively standard - to manage that sovereign risk. We want to make sure we are not impacting on the ability to attract developers and builders and industry to deliver for Government. That is the basis of having the cost reimbursement agreement.

**CHAIR** - Does Macquarie Point Development Corporation have any contingency in your budget for likely payouts to deal with these matters?

**Ms BEACH** - We have an existing funding allocation the Government has provided as part of the 2021 budget. We have funds in reserve. If there is a decision to develop a stadium, we will need to look at how those funds are allocated and it would include considering whatever costs we have on the table.

**CHAIR** - How much funds in reserve does Macquarie Point have at the moment?

**Ms BEACH** - The budget commitment in 2021 was a total, I think, of \$78 million, which included \$64 million capital and the rest was operational. We still have the majority of those funds.

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**CHAIR** - What about the provision, or whatever you call it, that the Government had made? Is that included in that money?

**Ms BEACH** - That was the full commitment announced as part of that budget.

**Mr WILLIE** - What consultation has the Government had with you on the capacity of the site. The Aurecon report talks about the contamination. Was there consultation on that?

**Mr SCULLIN** - Around the capacity of the site?

**Mr WILLIE** - There is a feasibility report the Government's done. It talks about what a stadium might look like. It talks about the contamination of the site. I think it said the field would have to be five metres above the surface in places because the site would be capped. Is that information that came from -

**Ms BEACH** - The actual process of assessing the site, the Corporation was not involved with. We did certainly have requests for information like the remediation work that has been done and the work that has been done. There is a lot of geotechnical and understanding around that specifics that were fed into that.

I think there are some assumptions in those reports around looking at working off the remediation that has been done. Remediation is relative. It is based on what the activity was, and what the intended future activity is. It has been remediated based on the historic activity in the various locations across the site over a couple hundred years and working towards the masterplan in particular. That is kind of the base information that would have been provided, and that would have been what Aurecon used.

It is not in practice, and I think this will happen as part of firming up what a stadium might look like if there is that decision, and doing some further work.

The remediation work that was done hasn't limited what you could do to the site. You could go down. It just means that the soil removed would need to be remediated and we'd be keen to assist with that because we've developed quite a bit of expertise in that in the corporation. The assumption in that report was working from the work that has been done going up. In practice, there would be capacity to go down. That was just a risk base on the information they would have had available.

**Mr WILLIE** - Okay, that's interesting. The sewer realignment, where is that at, and has it had to take a different path because of the stadium?

**Ms BEACH** - There was a procurement process in 2022 and BlackCap was appointed to do that work. The current sewer main that is existing runs along parallel to the goods shed and then runs directly from there to the wastewater treatment plant. We have been looking to progress that work. There are a few things that make that complex. One is that it's about a one-metre-sized pipe. It is gravity fed and it's quite flat. In fact, it goes up towards the treatment plant so it's relatively shallow in terms of what you can do on top. We have been looking at how we could provide more flexibility in the future delivery of the site with a different course that would probably go around the site rather than cutting it in half because it really constrains not just the next use but the use after that.

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The existing pipe that is in the ground is about 100 years old. They used to have quite long asset lives so we've been looking at what would give us more flexibility in what we can deliver on the site. We are looking at options for a redesign of that work.

**Mr WILLIE** - Based on the assumption there may be a stadium?

**Mr SCULLIN** - Where the board is at now is that it's a better way to do it so even if the stadium doesn't happen and we go back to the masterplan we'd still stick with that route rather than the original one going right through the middle of the site.

**Mr WILLIE** - Does it add extra costs?

**Mr SCULLIN** - It will be probably more expensive but we don't know how much more yet. Some of it is on TasPorts' land rather than ours but they are very comfortable so the discussions are continuing with TasPorts and TasWater to make sure that everybody is very comfortable with how this would all be done. That's part of the planning process at the moment. It's not fully planned or it's not fully costed but I expect it would be more expensive than the minimalist approach of just keeping the same path running through the middle of the site.

**CHAIR** - You said that BlackCap was awarded the contract to do what, the planning or the delivery of the moving of the sewer pipe?

**Ms BEACH** - The delivery of the works.

**CHAIR** - The whole lot?

**Mr SCULLIN** - For the original cost of the middle of the site plan.

**CHAIR** - So, you've engaged them but now you're not going to do that work?

**Ms BEACH** - We've paused or suspended the contract while we get some advice on design. The contract remains in place but they haven't commenced that work.

**Mr WILLIE** - You'd have to go back to market for the new design?

**Ms BEACH** - Only if the service has substantially changed so the advice we sought is that there is some variation in the specifics of the design but the actual services we were seeking were the same and there was an ability to suspend that contract. We can use that once we've got a revised design.

**Dr BROAD** - Were they ready to go? What was the original time line? Was it supposed to be done now?

**Ms BEACH** - Works were due to start in October last year.

**Dr BROAD** - October last year, so you were pretty much ready to start a month after you were told not to do anything to hinder the project; you were going to start within weeks?

**Ms BEACH** - As the Chair said, there's still a number of things that need to happen on the site regardless, so we looked at what the opportunities were there to work with BlackCap

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and the crew they had available to do those works. That's the work that has been completed in the last few months.

**Dr BROAD** - You had a contract in place: they were due to start in October last year but it was late September when the new letter came out and as a result of that, you had to pause and do the reassessment but they were ready to go. They were going to start in a few weeks?

**Ms BEACH** - Yes, we had a meeting with BlackCap's directors and talked about where they were at, what resources they'd allocated to that, and we looked at opportunities to do other work on site so we could best use those resources that were available.

**CHAIR** - What are the works that they are doing? They're obviously not moving the sewer pipe. What are they doing?

**Ms BEACH** - The current works that they're doing at the moment, as the Chair said, in December the Searoad shed was removed; below that still needed remediating which is the work they're doing at the moment. They also did some work in the middle of the site to finish the remediation buildings and clear field to make that a safe space to be used and they've done some works on our internal road.

**CHAIR** - So, that work, demolishing that one building and this work in the centre of the site wasn't already contracted to somebody else?

**Ms BEACH** - No, it was planned work but it wasn't contracted to anyone else to do that work.

**Mr WILLIE** - They were able to undertake that under the existing contract. It didn't have to go back to market with a different proposal?

**Ms BEACH** - They were a combination of RFQs, where they competed for the work and there were some parcels of that work that I made a decision to direct appoint, so that we could use resources that were available and use the costs that would have come to the corporation to complete those works.

**Dr BROAD** - Has that had a financial impact on the corporation? Has it cost you money to halt something that was due to start within weeks?

**Ms BEACH** - It will have. There are some elements of that work that could be - there was time to reallocate resourcing, there were materials that didn't need to be ordered, so we could offset that cost and we've been able to reuse some of those resources to do other works that were required onsite. There will be some remaining cost that was incurred preparing for that work that we weren't able to effectively reallocate.

**Dr BROAD** - Is there a ballpark for that? Are we talking tens of thousands, or hundreds of thousands, or millions?

**Ms BEACH** - I could take that on notice and get you a number.

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**Mr WILLIE** - In terms of their direct appointment to do work, how do the Treasurer's Instructions apply to the Corporation? Once work is over a certain amount then you have to go to tender.

**Ms BEACH** - They apply the same way they do to a Department. We don't fit within the scope of the Financial Management Act for them to apply, but our Act explicitly says that we are to comply with the Treasurer's Instructions established through that Act. So, it applies the same way as it does to a Department.

**Mr WILLIE** - Appointing to do work that wasn't the original contract was allowed under those -

**Ms BEACH** - Yes, we use the Treasurer's Instructions working through the arrangements provided in that.

**CHAIR** - Can I just go back. It's a little bit unclear to me. You got notification from the Minister in mid to late September about having to not do anything onsite that might impede the building of a stadium. You had a contractor ready to start the removal or relocating of the sewer pipe and that was to put it down through the middle of the site. If this announcement hadn't - if you hadn't got this on 18 September would that work have started in October as scheduled?

**Ms BEACH** - Yes. So, we've looked at it as an opportunity to have more flexibility in the future development of the site. In all likelihood, we would have proceeded with that work had the announcement not been made.

**CHAIR** - Because of this announcement you had to put the contract in abeyance basically, employ other people to do other work onsite because that seemed like the only way out, avoiding paying out a contract. If there was no other work onsite for them to do you would have had to pay them out, is that right?

**Ms BEACH** - Yes, we would have had to pay to a point because the contract was suspended. So, we'd look at what costs they'd reasonably incurred up to that point and in the immediate period where they had workers allocated and costs incurred that they could justify. There would have been cost if we hadn't proceeded and there weren't other works.

**CHAIR** - What time frame do you expect the new design work to be undertaken in? How long should that take?

**Ms BEACH** - That's happening at the moment. We'll get a design. We need to work with TasWater and make sure they're comfortable with it, because it will be their infrastructure once the work is complete. That design work is under way. That could hopefully start this calendar year, but it will depend on the design and getting that agreed by all the parties involved.

**CHAIR** - In terms of the amount of work that's there for their BlackCap contractors to do, is there adequate work at a price that you would have paid another contractor to do, or are they going to run out of work before this, knowing how long things take and they're often blown-out in time, as well as cost? Is there a chance we're going to pay them for doing nothing for a period?

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**Ms BEACH** - I don't think so. The work they're doing now is the remediation of the south-east corner. The cost that will likely incur beyond that work is costs that bore upfront, or were not able to reallocate. It's not so much a risk now of having something for those resources to do. It's just costs that would have been part of the previous contract that haven't been able to be transferred to other work.

**Dr BROAD** - Obviously, if the stadium gets under way, what is the role of the corporation while the stadium is being constructed? Or will the corporation simply be wound up and the responsibility handed over to another entity?

**Mr SCULLIN** - We're still the landowner and we are still responsible for the whole site. The board does not envisage that we will be the major party in the construction of any stadium, but we still have the science and Antarctic precinct, and the park and any other surrounds. Those will still need to be done. We would expect to work closely with whoever is tasked with constructing the stadium to ensure that the whole site still works and it all fits in. That is the way we would see it.

**Ms BEACH** - In some ways our role has been unchanged to a point because we're still preparing the site for development. It's just a different development than had previously been working towards. So, we will need to complete the remediation. We need to manage the sites and tenancies. There are some building works to do. We need to work through utilities that will need to be installed, ready to service. We'll be looking at revised planning and master planning work. There will still be a considerable amount of work for the corporation to do, and we haven't had any indication that there would be a change in that.

**Dr BROAD** - You had a budget allocation of \$78 million and you have the majority of that. Now the Government is talking like some of that money will be reallocated to the stadium project. That was one of the ways that they justified a reduction in costs. Have they communicated with you or involved you in that process? They reduced the cost from \$750 million to \$715 million, based on taking a slice of your cash. What involvement has the corporation had in that?

**Ms BEACH** - That's not my understanding. They're two discrete funding parcels. I think the reduction was looking at the work the corporation was already planning to do or would normally do, and that may have impacted in a reduction in that estimates. Things like providing utilities, landscaping - obviously the park is a critical part of the site going forward. We would deliver that for the cost that we had already planned to provide as part of that budget allocation. I think it was to remove duplication rather than us losing any money.

**Dr BROAD** - So part of the instruction wasn't to hang onto the cash?

**Ms BEACH** - No.

**Dr BROAD** - It wasn't about spending, it was just about: don't impede.

**Ms WEBB** - I was going to ask about your ongoing role also. Just to clarify a little more, you're still responsible for the site. It'll just be as if the stadium is one parcel that you're then giving to someone else to develop and you'll still be developing other elements of the site. What's your expectation about what's left? You mentioned a moment ago an Antarctic Precinct.

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We have heard from other stakeholders, even today, that their expectation was that the Antarctic Precinct wasn't there. Can you confirm which other elements will still be accommodated in some way on the site?

**Mr SCULLIN** - At the moment, based on our understanding of what a stadium might look like, and where it might sit, we still believe that we can fit in the science and Antarctic Precinct on the site where it has always been proposed. That should still be right. The park should still be right. For the Science and Antarctic Precinct, we still need the Federal Government to decide if they're in -

**Ms WEBB** - So the Science and Antarctic Precinct's funding is not yet confirmed?

**Mr SCULLIN** - Not that I am aware of. We are not aware, are we, Anne? We part funded the feasibility studies that have been done, so we were involved in that part of the process. It has always been that the decision is essentially one for Canberra to take because it essentially is led by the AAD with the CSIRO and IMAS falling in behind. So we've got a broad understanding of what the size of it might be and what it might look like, and we still think it can fit there. Then it's up to Canberra whether they decide to go ahead with it or not. If they were to decide not to go ahead, then we'll need to rethink what can we do on that corner that still captures the idea that we want to be the gateway to the Antarctic. So, it would be a question of working with the State Government to say if the Federal Government aren't there, then what can we do?

**Ms WEBB** - Do you have any indication from those science stakeholders who would potentially occupy that site as to whether the presence of a major stadium development makes it a more or less attractive or plausible option.

**Mr SCULLIN** - Anne's been closer in discussions than I have but there are some things about the stadium that are attractive in terms of conference facilities and other things that you could conceivably fit into a stadium, which would be very beneficial. It would mean in the precinct you don't need to have conference facilities and other things and if a hotel is part of the development that also could be useful when they have their large international gatherings and so on. Conceptually it doesn't hinder. Anne, correct me if I have that wrong.

**Ms BEACH** - That's correct. We are in very early stages of looking at how the site might be laid out in a scenario where there is a stadium. Our key drivers in that were looking at a stadium, how that might be located, providing for the Antarctic and Science Precinct and providing for the park. Then, secondary to that, what else is there opportunity for to develop on the site, but they have been our primary focus.

**Ms WEBB** - You mentioned a moment ago a hotel. So, is the hotel anticipated to be a separate parcel on that site or something that is incorporated in the stadium footprint?

**Mr SCULLIN** - I was envisaging it in the stadium but there is a bit of land there that you could look at whether a hotel might be useful.

**Ms WEBB** - In terms of the planning that you are doing around that layout and what options there might be, is that something that you are able to share with the Committee? So that we can see what that looks like in terms of when a stadium is in that site where those other elements potentially lie?

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**Ms BEACH** - I could give you something indicative. It is very much scratching out drafts at the moment. We don't have something we have settled on. We haven't identified use areas but we could provide something that gives an indication of those three key projects and how they might look.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you. It would be useful.

**CHAIR** - What about the other thing we need to include in that, is the heritage-listed Goods Shed? In terms of the work you have done to date, can the heritage-listed Goods Shed stay where it is?

**Ms BEACH** - We would need to look at how the site is laid out. The likely positioning of a stadium, that would be unlikely in its current location. It is listed as culturally significant in the local planning provisions. It is not listed on the State Heritage Register.

**Mr YOUNG** - Following on from finding out where things are going and then back to the original businesses, I assume, as you have said, that there will be negotiation around leases. To be honest if I was them, I would be keen to hang around if there is a stadium there so it may be that there might not be any cost to end the contract or renegotiate the contract?

**Ms BEACH** - It depends on the timeframe and the details which we don't have yet. Certainly, most of the site is remediated and the work we are doing now will finish the south-east corner of the site. There will be areas where there will be able to be continued use of the site alongside the construction of the various developments, which will be staged. There will be opportunity for that to continue.

A key thing that is driving the extent of the leases we can provide at the moment is our overarching planning approval so we are able to do interim activation that is not necessarily lining up with the masterplan. We are progressing those so we can provide some more certainty to our tenants.

**Dr BROAD** - Obviously, traffic is a bit of an issue in Hobart. Does rail have a role to play in the development of Macquarie Point? We have heard today from the Northern Suburbs Rail Group. They would like to see a stadium, if it goes ahead, with rail.

First question, is there any planning or thoughts around light rail and have you done traffic studies to get an idea on how to improve whatever you do on that site?

**Ms BEACH** - In the early site planning that we are doing, we are working through an assumption that there will be some sort of transport access along the north of the site running around the headlands around the Cenotaph in that area.

The decision around that will have to wait for advice and transport modelling that will be run from State Growth, from Infrastructure Tasmania or the Major Stadiums team, we would anticipate. They will be leading that work and we will have to feed that into our plan. At this point in time, we are assuming there will be some sort of transit access there, but we will have to wait for advice then we can draw up a plan to reflect the need. What mode that is and detail on that we will have to wait for and it is not something we are able to make a decision on or are involved in.



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**Dr BROAD** - Have you done any work yourselves in terms of traffic?

**Ms BEACH** - We have looked at traffic movements in terms of the current masterplan. We have had a look at the amount of movements that, for example, access the port which might inform a northern access route, but not beyond that. It has been about our current operations, not a future world in detail as it is not a space we have decision-making capacity in.

**Dr BROAD** - What did that show? That you needed northern access, a mass transit, or what? What was the outcome?

**Ms BEACH** - It was more looking at what sort of load is there. Over time, the primary access now to the port is Evans Street. As the site is developed, we did envision it becoming increasingly pedestrian focused and less vehicle, so it has that good connection with the city and the surrounding Sullivan's Cove area. We have looked at the sorts of numbers of movements and that is the work we will do at TasPorts. A northern access road to give a secondary access to the port would be led by State Growth, so it was really just to inform our thinking around a future world where it is more foot traffic rather than predominantly vehicles, as it is now.

**Dr BROAD** - But that was about traffic to the port, rather than traffic to the -

**Ms BEACH** - That is right, yes.

**Mr WILLIE** - It is my understanding the secretary of State Growth is on the board of the Macquarie Point Corporation. Have any conflicts of interest had to be managed? The secretary has been heavily involved in the stadium proposal. You are making decisions about contract variations and other things that may be beneficial to the stadium. Has that had to be managed?

**Ms BEACH** - The contract variations we have made have been within my delegation and account authority for that and certainly, made the Board aware, but it has not required the chair to sign all the corporate seal works needed to be a decision of the Board. Where we have those instances where things may be discussed that could be a conflict, the secretary would be asked to leave. I do not think we have had any of these recently. There have been some conflicts, we have not been able to attend meetings, so we have not had to deal with that, but there are mechanisms and procedures in place to excuse the secretary. It is important to note, he is on the board as an individual, not in his capacity as the secretary of State Growth.

**Mr WILLIE** - But no conflicts of being -

**Ms BEACH** - Well, at the start of every meeting, there is a registered parties and potential conflict of interest register that it does identify for clarity that his role as secretary of State Growth.

**CHAIR** - To follow on from Josh, the letter ran down in September, clearly Mr Evans would have been involved in State Growth discussions about the decision to consider a stadium for Macquarie Point. What meetings did you have before, after, and around that date?

**Mr SCULLIN** - What meetings did the Corporation have around the possibility of -

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**CHAIR** - No, just what dates were your meetings around that period?

**Ms BEACH** - We can get those dates for you. The board meets every second month and has an informal teleconference on the off month, so around that period we would have had a meeting before or after.

**CHAIR** - Around that time, when, obviously, there is a very high chance of some conflict here, was there a meeting that Mr Evans declared an interest and stepped away from?

**Mr SCULLIN** - I will get you the dates, but as a corporation, we have never sat down and said do we want a stadium or not want a stadium. It always been the case that that is a government decision. Whether through Mr Evans or from the minister or from his office, there had been information fed to the corporation about this is the thinking or this may be happening or that sort of thing, but it never required any deliberations on our part. We are working under a set of directions and a set of ministerial expectations. If that changes, it changes, so it is interesting to hear what thinking is going on, but it does not give rise, I think, in and of itself, to a conflict of interest. I will get the dates for you, yes.

**CHAIR** - Are you able to provide the minutes of those meetings on those dates as well to the Committee?

**Mr SCULLIN** - I do not know what the policy is on providing minutes.

**CHAIR** - This is parliamentary Committee: we can ask for papers.

**Ms BEACH** - I am happy to take that on notice.

**Ms WEBB** - Clearly since you received the communication about kind of keeping the options for a stadium open in September 2022. You had been interacting with your tenants and you had been interacting with contractors involved. Across the time that it has been a public discussion, then, have you received any communications or representations or advocacy from any other groups in the community, or any other stakeholders you had previously connected with in the development of masterplans and things like that on the stadium concept? Is that something you have received communications or representations about?

**Ms BEACH** - About views on the stadium?

**Ms WEBB** - People either providing information to you or providing a view to you or raising concerns with you or seeking something from you in terms of view?

**Ms BEACH** - Our conversations have been with having engagement with our tenants. I have not commented, either been asked or commented on a view of the corporation or our thinking on the stadium. The only interactions I can think of that would fit in that context is we have had some discussions with key stakeholders getting their thoughts around thinking for early site planning, if there were to be a stadium. We have reached out to a few people who are either our neighbours or potentially have future projects on site like the Australian Antarctic Division and asked them for what they saw as a future to help inform that site planning process. I cannot think of anything else that would fit -

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**Ms WEBB** - How about communicating to you? Not you seeking input, but people making representations to your groups or other sorts of stakeholders.

**Ms BEACH** - Not that I can think of other than discussions with tenants.

**Mr WILLIE** - Under the precinct plan, it is not possible to build a stadium at Macquarie Point currently, is it?

**Ms BEACH** - The current masterplan does not provide for a stadium, no.

**Mr WILLIE** - If a stadium was going to proceed, the Government would have to come back to Parliament to legislation, or -

**Ms BEACH** - It would depend on what planning pathway is undertaken. The master plan is part of the Sullivan's Cove Planning Scheme. It could be amended through a request for an amendment. It could be a major project. It could be a Project of State Significance.

**Mr WILLIE** - Even if it is a major project, it still has to comply with the planning scheme, doesn't it?

**Ms BEACH** - It would only need to comply with the planning scheme if it is going through the normal planning process. If it is going through a secondary process, it would not necessarily need to comply with the planning scheme. I do not know that any of that work has been done yet, to work out how that would be undertaken.

**Mr WILLIE** - Would it be your expectation that something would come back to parliament of this sort of significance?

**Ms BEACH** - Potentially. It would either need to be that or an amendment to the planning scheme. It would not necessarily need to go through parliament. It is certainly an option.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much for your time. Time goes very fast. We will send that letter with the follow-up questions to you.

**Mr SCULLIN** - We will respond as quickly as we can. Thank you.

**Ms BEACH** - Thank you.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**



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**CHAIR** - Welcome, Lord Mayor, to our proceedings, and your colleague, Kelly. This is the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Accounts inquiring into the proposed stadium at Macquarie Point and the AFL team and obviously it is in the municipality of the Hobart City Council. It is a public hearing, it is being streamed and the transcript will form part of our public evidence.

Everything you say here before the Committee is covered by parliamentary privilege but that may not extend outside of this Committee hearing. If you want to provide any evidence to the Committee of a confidential nature you could make that request and the Committee will consider it, otherwise it is all public.

If you do not have any questions before we start I will ask you to make the statutory declaration and I will ask Ms Grigsby if she can agree to it after I read it to her.

**Ms ANNA REYNOLDS**, LORD MAYOR AND ALDERMAN, HOBART CITY COUNCIL AND **Ms KELLY GRIGSBY**, CEO, (VIA WEBEX), HOBART CITY COUNCIL, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for appearing. We have your submission and we have read that. We would appreciate you giving an overview of who you are for the record and speak to your submission and anything else you would like to raise in addition to that and then the Committee will have questions for you.

**LM REYNOLDS** - Thank you for making the time. This submission was passed by a full meeting of the Council before it was submitted and approved by the Council. Our submission has five parts and I will touch on them.

The first part is really an outline of the planning and public interest issues raised by the Council's elected members at their one and only meeting with government members about the proposal. There is a very high-level list in the submission but I think it gives an indication about the kinds of issues that the elected member body are interested in, things like the finer-grain detail of the size, scale and location of the structure. We have heard things like 40 metres in height, which is about 11 to 14 storeys, and dimensions of around 100 or 120 metres of diameter, but we don't have that information and there are also no renders or understanding of the visual impact of this structure on key city assets such as the heritage-listed Hunter Street warehouses and how it appears from places like Constitution Dock and also the Cenotaph. These are really important cultural and city assets.

Another issue that was raised by the elected members is when the site is used, what are the transport access arrangements to be developed and will it be developed as a central part to the project or as an afterthought? It is recognition that there are several hundred million dollars and significant amounts of planning to think about the transport access. Also, from a city perspective, does the structure allow for public transport to travel through the site and into the city? There's talk about this being a project that could help facilitate better public transport into the city and the use of the Northern Suburbs Rail Corridor. The question is, though, does the size of the structure allow for that project and that access to travel through the site?

Another issue of interest to the elected members is when this facility is not being used, how good is this type of facility going to be for activating that part of the city? For cities, stadiums can be very exciting places to be when they're full, but they can be windy, shady and

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pretty lonely when they're not used, so that's a really key issue for us because this is a significant strategic site for the Council. We've followed the development of master plans very closely over the years and our expectation was this would be a very busy, active and lively part of the city, so elected members are really uncertain about what the plans will mean for activation of the site.

The second part of our submission is to provide clarification of the planning process. Our submission outlines at a high level the planning context for Macquarie Point. In summary, the site falls under the Sullivans Cove Planning Scheme and the planning authority currently is the City of Hobart so until that changes we are the body for approving any development application.

There have been a number of planning scheme amendments approved by the Council in response to different master plans. The most recent master plan was approved by Council in June 2019 and the Tasmanian Planning Commission in October 2019. I was going to read from the report from that time about why we felt that master plan was so suitable for the Sullivans Cove Planning Scheme and all the goals in the Sullivans Cove Planning Scheme, but I probably won't go into that right now but I can provide that.

The current approved planning provisions do not contemplate a stadium. The question is whether there is going to be a planning scheme amendment process or another path. I guess the expectation is that it would take a major projects legislation pathway which will basically mean the Council has no role except as, obviously, the city shaper. So the city experts will have a role in providing information, but under major projects legislation it would be the Macquarie Point Development Corporation that would have to provide consent and then an assessment panel would be appointed by the Tasmanian Planning Commission. The other option is special legislation which is what happened with the Parliament Square redevelopment, but the major projects legislation process would not go to parliament at all and it wouldn't go to us.

The third part of our submission is the chronology of Macquarie Point, which we thought would be a helpful document. It is not 100 per cent complete but it does include both Macquarie Point key dates and key dates for when there was a touchpoint with the Council in terms of the Council decision, and if you are interested in any of the Council reports or Council minutes, I can provide those later. There are some interesting things in there. One of the ones that jumped out for me was in June 2015 the MOU with the Tasmanian Government to work cooperatively to have the wastewater treatment plant decommissioned by 30 June 2019, and the most recent estimates I've seen are around 2025 or 2026 for that to be decommissioned.

The fourth part of our inquiry relates to commentary on the envisaged uses. We were on a trajectory as a city on the basis of the last previously approved master plan. Up until the September 2022 announcement that's what we were expecting as a city and what we were planning for, so there's a bit of high-level commentary in our submission about the Truth and Reconciliation Art Park. We did receive a deputation from Greg Lehman. The Council received that and as a Council we supported that project. We recognised it was eight years of work, but never really any proper budget allocated to its development so, it never came out of the ground.

The Antarctic and Science Precinct was always a key part of the previous master plan. The City of Hobart and the metro councils more broadly, strongly support a world class

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Antarctic and Science Precinct and urgent repairs to the Hobart Port, because we believe that this is Hobart's key differentiating - economic development pathways are our status as a gateway city and our ability to attract investment around science and research, advanced manufacturing, logistics. This is a key part of our economic strategy. Hobart is currently the most tourism dependent of the capital city economies and we are low on the list of high percentage of knowledge economy job in Hobart, so a key part of our economic development strategy is that precinct.

Since September [2022], we have been unclear as to where that is going, but we do strongly support that project and the repairs to the port because Infrastructure Australia has identified that the RSV *Nuyina*, whose home port is Hobart, currently does not have an adequate berthing facility to operate a world-class Antarctic gateway. We believe that is of national significance and that work should be being prioritised by both the State and Federal Governments. The submission touches on that and then the final part of the submission which I will refer to Ms Grigsby, is the importance of broader strategic city planning for any future development. Kelly did you want to speak to that part of the submission briefly?

**Ms GRIGSBY** - Thank you, Lord Mayor. As outlined in our submission, the City of Hobart has been focused on ensuring we have a joined-up approach to streetscaping, as the Lord Mayor referenced earlier. We have set about quite an ambitious 12-month program to ensure we have the right city planning arrangements in place and these essentially are driven by a structured plan we are developing. The most recent of which is the Central Hobart Precinct Structure Plan that is out on final community exhibition at the moment.

What we have proposed in regard to Macquarie Point and a broader geographical area that captures the inner north-east area of Hobart, is to prepare a plan that looks at the future blueprint for development of that part of the city. It concerns itself with things that look at development for the next 20 years to ensure any projects considered are connected back within the CBD, have the right transport links, provide a clear blueprint for infrastructure development, but importantly provide a real sense of the future vision for Hobart as a growing city. It is about ensuring we have residential development occurring in the right parts of the city centre, that we have commercial activation happening in the right areas and as the Lord Mayor has outlined, the focus of Macquarie Point being about ensuring the growth of the knowledge economy and supporting the broader Tasmanian economy as the engine room of the state.

The Inner Northeast Structure Plan has commenced. We are currently assessing proposals from suitable consultants to undertake that work. We have a steering Committee established that includes Council, but also other key stakeholders in and around that site. The idea of that work is to ensure we join all that planning together and have a cohesive vision to ensure the future development and infrastructure priorities identified in a way that best serves the city for a 20-year period as the planning horizon. It will involve extensive stakeholder consultation and certainly, extensive community consultation as that work unfolds. It will, in its fundamental intent actually draw all of that planning together so each of those key planning areas have their key role and function identified, particularly around transport, connectivity, pedestrian access, public amenity, activation and how we grow the knowledge economy, but also the night-time economy and how that links with a society and cultural precinct within the City of Hobart. It is a very important piece of work that has commenced recently at the city of Hobart in partnership with our key stakeholders. Thanks, Lord Mayor.

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**CHAIR** - Thanks. You made mention of having a briefing or meetings with the Premier around that decision time of the Government. It would be helpful if you could provide to the Committee any around the July 2022 meeting. You sent an email for a briefing, I note that it is from that briefing, because that was before the public announcement was made about Macquarie Point and the stadium.

**LM REYNOLDS** - It was, but basically, I was motivated by media of a visit by AFL executives about July. I picked up the paper and AFL executives are on a tour of sights around Hobart to look at stadium sites.

**CHAIR** - Regatta Point was on the table at that point?

**LM REYNOLDS** - Regatta Point was on the table, Macquarie Point was on the table, the TCA ground, other spots on the Glebe. I guess I sort of thought why was there a Council? I found out that there was no Council officer or anyone invited along and I felt a bit like it was not really fair or proper for that tour to occur without Council being involved and representation, and that was the motivation for the email seeking a briefing in July.

**CHAIR** - Do you have a record of that briefing?

**LM REYNOLDS** - That briefing did not happen.

**CHAIR** - Oh, it did not happen?

**LM REYNOLDS** - No, so, we did not actually finally meet with the Premier and a few other key people until December.

**CHAIR** - Alright, there was no engagement to tell you that the decision had been made to recommend the stadium be built at Macquarie Point?

**LM REYNOLDS** - No, not with elected members or myself and, I am pretty sure, not with officers either. Pretty much we have been finding out things as they become public in the media, yes.

**Ms WEBB** - Was your email acknowledged?

**LM REYNOLDS** - I would have to go back and get the record on that, but I could provide it. Also, to be fair, I think there was a date set that was then too close to the Council election, it might have been a bit earlier. There was an attempt to arrange a briefing a little bit earlier than December [2022], but then, yes, it did not work out.

**Dr BROAD** - Is it fair to say you were not consulted, you were finding things out through the media back then, but that process appears to be still occurring? Did you have any awareness of the most recent announcement of housing at Regatta Point or, once again, did you find out in the media?

**LM REYNOLDS** - I have quite an outline of that process because it has been topical in the media recently. No, there was a quarterly meeting I have with the Premier in mid-March [2023], and we talked about a range of things including the mountain and a whole range of other issues. In that meeting, there was mention there could be housing outside the



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Macquarie Point site, but there was no real detail provided and it was suggested that officers could get together and talk about that. I then followed up the next day, on 16 March [2023] to say thanks for the discussion. However, I felt it was really important for there to be some formality on any discussions because at that stage, we did think it was a Council leased land. I was very mindful of the need to ensure there was formality and there was a Council process to be comfortable with our officers talking about the future of an area of land the councils had interest in, so I did follow up with an email to the Premier stating that, on 16 March. I did request there be a formal written request to the Council that we could present to our elected members. On 3 April [2023] we still hadn't received anything in writing. There had been a very high-level meeting with our CEO and the Secretary of the Department of State Growth and CEO of Macquarie Point Development Corporation but again the CEO was very conscious that she needed to keep that at the very high level because she didn't have the Council's okay to talk about different parts of land and that sort of thing, so it was at a very high level. I wrote on 3 April [2023] and asked for that formal letter to come and then a formal letter was provided to the CEO on 6 April [2023], but that was a draft letter and that did provide some more detail

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**CHAIR** - Who is that from?

**LM REYNOLDS** - From -

**Dr BROAD** - A draft letter, so not an official letter?

**LM REYNOLDS** - An official letter has since come in, so the CEO might be able to provide a bit more detail because it wasn't obviously to me.

**CHAIR** - Who is it from?

**LM REYNOLDS** - The two people - Kim Evans and Anne Beach. That gave us a little bit more detail.

**Dr BROAD** - What's the purpose of sending it as a draft?

**LM REYNOLDS** - I don't know.

**Dr BROAD** - To get your comment and then do an official? It seems quite bizarre that it's got draft written all over it.

**LM REYNOLDS** - You'd have to ask the authors of the letter. The letter was addressed to the CEO and the CEO let me know about it after Easter and then we were very keen, obviously, to ensure that all of this was taken through to the Council, so that the Council was informed. That went to the Council at our most recent meeting on 22 April [2023].

**Dr BROAD** - As a draft though?

**LM REYNOLDS** - No, there was another version that was received after that. Ms Grigsby would probably be aware of it. I didn't actually see that one, but it was very similar information.

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**Ms GRIGSBY** - Thank you, Lord Mayor, I might just come in there and be clear that we are talking about two separate processes. One was in regard to understanding the kind of status of the land as it related to the leasehold on Regatta Point: hence the draft nature of the correspondence initially, because at that stage there was still an understanding that the City of Hobart actually had a lease in place for that land, as it transpired. That was actually let go, or the lease wasn't renewed in 2019. There was actually official correspondence that was provided to me as the CEO. It was dated 13 April [2023], but it was in fact received by my office late in the afternoon on 17 April [2023] and that really outlined the proposal around Regatta Point in some detail but it did make clear that the lease was essentially in legal overholding, which is the status of it currently.

**Ms WEBB** - Can I clarify who that letter was from finally then? The final one that came to you late on 17 August (sic)?

**Ms GRIGSBY** - I think we need to be clear, it was actually the official correspondence that was actually sent to my office and it was from Kim Evans, the Secretary of the Department of State Growth and also the interim CEO at Macquarie Point.

**Ms WEBB** - Is Regatta Point also under the purview of the Macquarie Point Development Corporation?

**Ms GRIGSBY** - No, it hadn't been previously and I think that's why I think it's important to understand that some of these preliminary conversations were sort of that early planning investigation of the status of the land and who actually had control over the management of that land because historically for some years it had actually been the City of Hobart. So that was the context in which the City of Hobart was approached in the first instance around the housing proposal. Having said that, as the Lord Mayor said, the Premier had raised the matter with the Lord Mayor at a previous catch-up but it hadn't been discussed specifically in regards to that site until the meeting that occurred with me at an officer level and it was really around understanding the ownership and the relationship with the site. Clearly, it's Crown land, but as I said, the City of Hobart for some time had had a lease, more than 10 years, and had some ongoing interest in the site. Technically, that is still managed by the City of Hobart, albeit on a month-by-month basis in a sort of overholding situation because we didn't take up the option to renew the lease back in 2019.

**LM REYNOLDS** - I think around about this time a number of other stakeholders were getting sort of high-level briefings, not necessarily with information, the Regatta Association and RSL and those others were becoming aware of this looking like a development site. They reached out to me as well, I guess as stakeholders who were interested in the site and concerned about potentially what was happening and what else -

**CHAIR** - As Lord Mayor, how do you feel that such a major development that would normally have the Council assess development applications on - because it fits in with your whole city plan as has been outlined by yourself and by Kelly there a minute ago - would be taken right away from the purview of the Council, to actually approve a significant development onsite? Does that concern you? If the project becomes a major project.

**LM REYNOLDS** - I mean, the Council hasn't considered this as an elected member body. My comments will be my own personal comments, not those of the Council. I think any city Council, any democratically-elected group of city managers would feel concerned about

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not having input into some of these ideas, but also not able to bring the expertise that sits within the Council to the discussions.

I mean, the management of the city and all of the streets and assets around this site is pretty much the core business of the Council, and there's a lot of deep knowledge and history inside the organisation. Plus, in terms of just what works in cities, what's the experience of urban renewal projects in other cities, what's the experience of stadia in other cities, what sort of economic development we're looking for, all of those considerations are things that are our bread and butter. We do it. We're thinking about those things every day.

I personally would think that the elected members would feel some sense of disappointment that they are not more engaged, or haven't been more engaged to this point in this decision which has moved pretty quickly. It really wasn't even on the radar until July, and then obviously the announcement in September, and then suddenly here we are. It's all sort of systems go.

I think there is still a long way to go in terms of planning. The community has to be engaged. It's not feasible for this just to be sort of sorted out with a couple of officers and a Prime Minister and a Premier, and for the community not to really have some role in it, and a consultation process. I would hope that that happens soon, and the Council obviously will want to play a strong role in that discussion as well.

**CHAIR** - In any event, a stadium can't be built there without some change to either the process and/or the planning scheme.

**LM REYNOLDS** - There's definitely a big period of planning work that will need to happen, both the detailed design, consultation processes, but also then engineering assessments and those kinds of things. The Government will need to choose whether it goes through a planning scheme process and we're the planning authority, so they're arms-length from it, or whether they would prefer to have maximum oversight of it through a major project.

**Dr BROAD** - Throughout this process, how would you describe the way that the Council has been treated and involved in this whole stadium, right from the first one at Regatta Point through to where we are now?

**LM REYNOLDS** - Again, speaking personally because the Council has not declared a position on how it has been treated, I think that the Council has not been considered as a serious stakeholder in the process. Stakeholders such as the AFL have probably been given more weight in the planning process than the Council. There have been points along the way when we have been informed, this is what we are looking at and that has been appreciated. I don't think we have been as involved in this plan as we have been through the previous master planning processes where we, as the planning authority, have had to play a role in looking at the master plan, putting it out for consultation and approving changes to the planning scheme to incorporate the master plan. So far, we haven't been a central player in this discussion.

**Dr BROAD** - You have been informed rather than consulted.

**LM REYNOLDS** - I would describe it in that way, yes. Minimal consultation on a few elements like what was just described about Regatta Point, seeking some information but not really interested in whether we think that is a good site for housing. Maybe that is still to come

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and I would hope there is still a lot more planning to do and the State Government would consider our north-east structure plan that the CEO talked about. We will keep looking at best practice urban planning, best practice urban renewal and looking at drawing all the evidence about the city and we will keep providing that information. Whether it is taken on board, I cannot say. It is up to the state Government to accept that advice. We will keep doing the thinking about it because what happens on this site has significant implications not just on the site but on the entire central Hobart area.

**Ms WEBB** - I appreciate the time line, the chronology, that you included in your submission. It is useful. I want to ask about the final one there on that list where you said:

**February 2023** - MDPC commissions a site district plan regarding the integration of the proposed arts, entertainment and sporting precinct with the Antarctic and Science Precinct ...

They have commissioned that work from whom? Are you aware?

**LM REYNOLDS** - I think that was what Anne was talking about in the last part of her submission.

**Ms WEBB** - The mapping out, how they all might fit?

**LM REYNOLDS** - The CEO might know more about that work.

**Ms WEBB** - Just before you answer, I am interested to know what involvement, if any, the Council is having into that process or communications about that?

**Ms GRIGSBY** - My understanding is that we have been talking about that City Cultural Precinct now and its connectivity with Mac Point for some time. There was some preliminary work done last year to look at how we better plan that as an integrated area. This next step that Macquarie Point are undertaking is more about Macquarie Point and its connection to that site whereas outlined in my earlier point, the inner north-east structure plans looks at the whole planning area, not just that part of it. I think that has been commissioned as part of Macquarie Point work.

There has already been some planning work done for that city cultural precinct and its relationship with Macquarie Point. That has not been finalised, that was some preliminary work to inform some other discussions at officer level that led us, as a Council, to considering the development of a broader strategic planning exercise which is the inner north-east structure plan that recognises the links also with the growth corridor as well as North Hobart and some of those other parts of the growing city.

**Ms WEBB** - In terms of the commissioning of that site district plan, that's purely the Corporation's work and nothing that the Council's feeding into at this point?

**Ms GRIGSBY** - I didn't hear the earlier session, I'm sorry. That's my understanding that Macquarie Point are undertaking a master planning exercise and I am sure they will consult more formally at an appropriate point in time.

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**Ms WEBB** - The other part I want to ask about from that chronology is from October 2021 where you've identified that a detailed business case for the Antarctic and Science Precinct at Macquarie Point was finalised which examined and costed identified precinct options. What is the status in your understanding of that piece of work, the business case of the Antarctic and Science Precinct with costed precinct options? Is that now defunct or is that still in operation?

**LM REYNOLDS** - The CEO is probably aware of this. In January 2023, Deloitte engaged to undertake a peer review so there are still projects taking place but the bigger picture message is that the Antarctic and Science Precinct is in a little bit of trouble.

**Ms WEBB** - Due to a lack of funding commitment?

**LM REYNOLDS** - Yes, a lack of funding commitment: lack of a real champion. The Tasmanian Government has certainly said they would like to see it in place but then they are saying it's somebody else's decision and they haven't put any of their own money forward. I don't think they've put in the work with the new Government that is required for the new Federal Government to actually get it. It just feels like it's slipping away in terms of a project that has real momentum behind it.

**Ms WEBB** - In terms of that risk of it slipping away, the Aboriginal art park then which is still, apparently, being sketched in to see where it fits maybe around the edges of the stadium, does that also risk slipping away due to a lack of a funding commitment from someone specific and/or a lack of a champion to take ownership? We've heard that they're trying to see where they can fit it in but presumably without a funding commitment or someone who's driving it -

**LM REYNOLDS** - Yes, that's right. I would recommend if you have an opportunity to seek evidence directly from Professor Greg Lehman because he was involved in the project from its inception. He worked with DarkLab and came up with the idea and worked with the Macquarie Point Corporation through a planning process so he has a much deeper understanding. I have spoken to Professor Lehman on a couple of occasions. We had the briefing and he recently presented to elected members as part of this Macquarie Point Vision Group. There's a new community group that released a vision last week and they briefed us last night. His message is that nobody has spoken to him about what's happened which feels really tragic.

This was the centrepiece; this was the big vision that joined it all up and there was very strong messaging from the state Government that this was the centrepiece of the site up until just days or weeks before the actual stadium announcement. I appreciate that there's a suggestion that there will be some room made available but the message from Professor Lehman to us was that it's not going to be adequate to really do all the things that the original concept had and that it will end up feeling like a bit of an afterthought, a bit tokenistic rather than the centrepiece, the concept that joined the whole site together. It has been effectively sidelined as the key concept of the site and now it will probably be a bit of a more of an add-on but, as I said, I think it's better that you seek that evidence directly from Professor Lehman.

**Ms WEBB** - Given the comments you have just made about the Antarctic Precinct and the Aboriginal art park, what is your assessment of the risk that if the decision is made for the stadium to go ahead and it presses on, that it becomes the sole development that is done there

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because it has a champion and a driver and the other elements don't? Is that something that you see as a tangible risk?

**LM REYNOLDS** - That's what is happening. That is what has been happening since September. The amount of effort and work that has gone into pulling together business cases, pulling together urban precincts, finding bits of land to put housing so that the Prime Minister can say there is housing involved, the trips to Canberra, the lobbying for the funding. There has been significant effort put into the stadium proposal, which in some ways you can say, isn't it great that finally there is some energy around getting things happening at Macquarie Point? The state Government would say that. That was always an option for the State Government to do at any point, particularly since the MONA vision was committed to at the end of 2016 but it seems it took the AFL's interest in the link the team that had everyone moving. I appreciate that getting moving is great.

What I am concerned about is that nobody looked at the logistics of the scale of the building early on enough and how big it needs to be and whether that is such a great site for it, given the scale of the size of it. My personal concern is that to have a 23,000-seat stadium on Macquarie Point is a challenging ask to get it all in and then to get other bits and pieces. This is why they are looking for other sites around the precinct to put other bits and pieces. The Prime Minister is right. It shouldn't just be a stadium. It needs to be a mixed-use site but the scale of the building is so significant that if you want to have your 23,000 seats then you run out of space.

I wonder if there was the deep enough understanding even though everyone thinks it is a huge site, but stadiums of that size, even though it is not as big as the MCG or something that big, it is a significant structure and there isn't a lot of room for much else.

**CHAIR** - It would be on a similar scale as Marvel Stadium, you would think?

**LM REYNOLDS** - I don't know Marvel, I am sorry. Is that Docklands?

**CHAIR** - I think it has more tiers in it.

**LM REYNOLDS** - I am not sure whether you are speaking to the authors of this site assessment report that was done by the State Government.

**CHAIR** - Which one is that?

**LM REYNOLDS** - It was done a while ago. I think it was February 2022 by the site selection process. It was done by Philp Lighton Architects. That is where they looked at Macquarie Point and Regatta Point and TCA Ground. There is some quite good information in those and it does start with some stadiums from other places and looks at the size that is required.

**Mr YOUNG** - With regard to Regatta Point, and I apologise in advance if I missed this on the time line, when you received the letter, what efforts did you or your staff make to engage in that proposal before you went public with it all?

**LM REYNOLDS** - Went public with?

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**Mr YOUNG** - When you did the media conference. Did you try to reach out to the Government?

**LM REYNOLDS** - There was a letter received by the CEO and we took the issue to the Council to inform them. I wrote to the Prime Minister about some of the concerns around the site basically to try to meet his expectations that there would be housing and a mixed-used development. I wanted him to be aware that I felt this site was inappropriate.

**Mr YOUNG** - That's an assumption on your part though.

**LM REYNOLDS** - What is?

**Mr YOUNG** - That is why the Prime Minister -

**LM REYNOLDS** - When I was in Canberra, one of the people I met with did say there was an expectation, there was some looking at places for housing. It was important for the Federal Government for it to be an urban renewal project.

I did some media with stakeholders that had been informed quite separately and independently by the State Government about this site. I worked and stood with them to support them in their concerns - the Regatta Association, RSL. However, those people had received, I think, verbal briefings from State Government. Again, nobody really had any deep information, but the general conversations that this is the kind of thing we are looking at, and keeping people a bit broadly informed. The message had gone out in a range of ways about the project.

**Mr WILLIE** - On that, are you going to be the planning authority on that site? Will it be treated separately to the Macquarie Point precinct?

**LM REYNOLDS** - I imagine that would probably, be packaged up as part of a major project.

**Mr WILLIE** - So, it would all go in together, not separated.

**LM REYNOLDS** - Yes, as a major project process, that is right, because as we have found out, the Council did not renew the lease for a long lease back in 2019. It is not Council land.

**Ms WEBB** - It's Crown land.

**LM REYNOLDS** - Yes, initially we thought it was Council land, but it seems it is not.

**CHAIR** - So, was the plan to not renew the lease on oversight or a decision?

**LM REYNOLDS** - It was certainly not a decision, but Ms Grigsby could probably talk about it more. I am pretty sure it did not come to Council, but Ms Grigsby is looking into something about it at the moment.

**Ms GRIGSBY** - That is correct, Lord Mayor.

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**CHAIR** - Is there a potential to seek a new lease over that land or has the horse bolted now?

**Ms GRIGSBY** - Lord Mayor, that is something we are still exploring at the moment.

**CHAIR** - Lara, any questions?

**Mrs ALEXANDER** - No, thank you, Chair. What questions I had have been covered through other members asking.

**CHAIR** - In terms of the future, as you said, there is still a lot of work to be done through planning and other processes, but what do you see is the appropriate level of engagement with the Hobart City Council, and the Government and the Macquarie Point Development Corporation around this?

You may not have heard a Macquarie Point Development Corporation representative say that they did not believe they would have any role in the construction of the stadium, they would be looking at the remaining areas of the site, should the stadium proceed, so I am interested in how you see your ongoing engagement with them, as a key stakeholder.

**LM REYNOLDS** - I think as the CEO outlined, we are proceeding with a precinct plan or structure plan that looks beyond the boundaries, that looks right around, even beyond the Regatta Point area, looks into City Hall and Dunn Street, and all the sort of north-east corner of the central Hobart area. We will do that thinking anyway because, with these kinds of things, you never know which direction they are going to take; whether there will be some sort of problem identified, whether there will be changes of government, whether there will be changes of mood, whether there will be all sorts of things.

We are the constant planners and strategic planners for the city, so we will do that work anyway and we would really like to involve the community, involve Macquarie Point, the State Government, all the stakeholders, and all the landowners around there, and just make sure we can have a plan that ensures that the place works. Obviously transport and making enough room for transport, whether it's for a stadium, for a smaller entertainment centre or for a truth and reconciliation park and an Antarctic Precinct, a mass public transport system was always going to have to be an essential part to make that site really work and to activate it, so that will be a key piece that we will be following and advocating for as well.

**Ms WEBB** - In terms of the necessity for a mass transport system of some sort to service the site, we heard earlier today from the Northern Suburbs Rail Action Group who have made the assertion that the bus-based system that the Government seems to have decided will be inadequate and their assertion is that a rail-based system is the more appropriate and effective one to contemplate. Does Hobart City Council have a position on which form of transport system that corridor may well best be served by?

**LM REYNOLDS** - I can't recall a recent Council decision, but we previously have been advocates for a really effective mass transit system on the corridor and coming all the way into Macquarie Point. The most recent thinking is for the rapid bus system to leave the corridor around Risdon Road and join the normal roads so there wouldn't actually be a service all the way through into Macquarie Point. I don't know whether this project will change that, but that's certainly what the more recent planning I'm aware of was envisaging, that it wouldn't actually



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come all the way into Macquarie Point. Over a decade, the Council has taken an interest in the corridor and participated in and commissioned studies into how this would reinvigorate the northern suburbs and drive housing and economic development, so it's been a source of frustration that there's really not been the momentum behind that project.

The talk about this stadium reinvigorating that is promising, but the work has to be done, it's not just going to pop out of the ground, and the money has to be found as well, and that planning needs to happen right at the beginning of the process, not after we have decided we're going to put this thing here and we'll work out a way to access it later.

**Ms WEBB** - Is it your expectation that that planning will occur? I mean, we're already at the beginning of this process in a sense, we're already looking not too far down the track of expecting a decision of some sort, but you haven't been engaged as a Council in planning or input into the transit options?

**LM REYNOLDS** - No. My personal view is that Tasmania is lacking enough capacity and skills in public transport planning. Some years ago the Greater Hobart mayors advocated for a public transport commissioner or commission, because nobody is really doing the quite substantial amount of work that needs to be done if you want to implement and scale up public transport systems and create new public transport infrastructure. It can't be done off the side of someone's desk who is not a public transport expert.

There have been a whole heap of studies commissioned but they're often commissioned by consultants and there is no-one really within the Government whose job it is to be thinking at that strategic level about the growth in our public transport system. We have bus service providers but not adequate institutional strength and capacity in public transport planning, from my perspective and that was the position of the Greater Hobart mayors previously.

**Ms WEBB** - I think the Legislative Council inquiry into Greater Hobart traffic congestion also landed with a recommendation around a centralised location for strategically driving those things. Interesting.

**CHAIR** - We're just about out of time. Anything you would like to say to the Committee, Lord Mayor, before we wrap up?

**LM REYNOLDS** - I just think for the public interest and also the interests of the city, a cost-benefit analysis needs to occur. People say that other projects will still be able to funded, but as a Mayor of a city that hasn't had this kind of significant investment from State and Federal Government in the city before, it's good to have lots of additional money coming in. My fear is that this will be the last of the money for some time and other projects won't happen.

I think it's really important, particularly if there are cost blowouts, which I think the public is concerned about. However, we would also be concerned for other projects, for example upgrading amateur sporting facilities like our New Town precinct, or our aquatic centre, things that are used by thousands of people every week, or the public transport infrastructure, or the arts and cultural projects, and the Antarctic and Science Precinct. These are all projects that are really significant for the city.

I really encourage the inquiry to think about how we can ensure that there's an independent cost review built into this process, that there's a transparent set of fresh eyes that

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look into all the costings that are being developed for this project, and being very clear about what we are signing up for, because a lot of stadium proposals have cost blowouts and delays.

It's very sad that in the attempt to actually get something happening in the site it potentially may end up seeing an even longer period of time for activation of Macquarie Point, because obviously the plan isn't for it to open until 2029, which is still a long way away; whereas I feel we were getting to the point where things were moving ahead and we just want to see activation, the site being lively and vibrant and bringing in a lot of economic activity. We would just like to see more of that information as elected members and more involvement as well.

**Mr WILLIE** - On that, do you think any of that information will make a difference to Government decision-making? I mean, this is clearly about the AFL and the condition they're putting on the licence, so even if that work is done, do you think the Government would pay any attention to it?

**LM REYNOLDS** - I do think an independent cost assessment is important. Any Government should be really clear about what it's signing up for. Obviously, we don't want corners cut. This does need to have really high design quality, and given where it sits, with the Cenotaph and the Hunter Street warehouses, the last thing we'd want is something of low design quality. I think it is really important, whether through the inquiry or another inquiry down the track, that somebody commissions an independent cost assessment that can look at all of the factors and make sure we're really clear from very early on what the likely full cost of the project will be, including the transport solution as well. We've got to have the entire picture, and maybe some of the work we're doing can help feed into that in terms of the structure plan that the CEO mentioned.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much. We appreciate your time.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**

**The Committee adjourned at 2:49 pm.**